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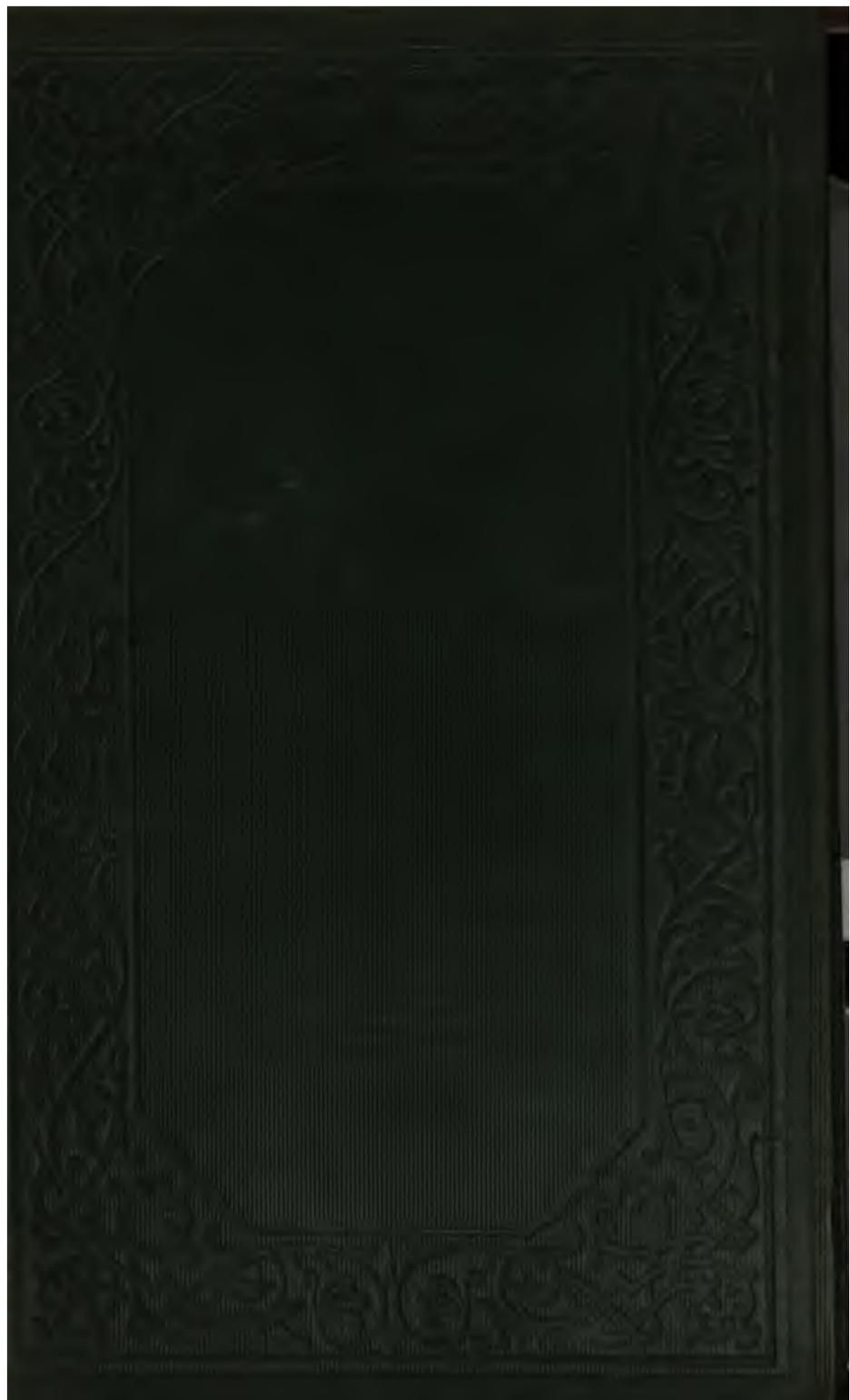
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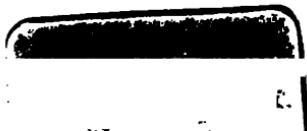
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K A T E D E V E R E U X.

A STORY OF MODERN LIFE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.



LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1851.

249. 2. 9.

London :
Printed by Schulze and Co., 13, Poland Street.

KATE DEVEREUX.

CHAPTER I.

“ Then go, fallacious Hope! adieu!
The flattering prospect I resign;
And bear from my deluded view
The bliss that never must be mine!”

CARTWRIGHT.

“ COME and read to me, Madame,” said an old lady who appeared very infirm, to her companion; “ I am getting very tired of this place; there is little to see,—little to hear,—and little going on. You may as well read to me, for I do not know what to do with myself.”

“ You will find it very different in a week or two, Mrs. Charteris,” said her companion, “ when visitors arrive. At present, I do not wonder at your finding it dull.”

“ I should find any place, and every place, dull, in my present state,” rejoined Mrs. Charteris, “ of that I am well aware. Mind and body are alike diseased, I believe. That poor boy, Madame, that poor boy ! What can have become of him ? I never can get him, waking or sleeping, out of my thoughts. Sometimes it strikes me that I might have acted differently,—I need not have been so inexorable ! We are all frail human beings, we should bear with each other’s infirmities and burdens. I might have let him be happy his own way, —don’t you think so, Madame ?”

“ I always did think so, Mrs. Charteris,” replied Madame ; “ though you never before did me the honour to ask my advice.”

“ It is a great responsibility, to destroy the happiness of a whole life, when one comes to

consider it," said Mrs. Charteris, musing ; " and for no earthly reason except pride, mere human pride. On the other hand, it was very provoking, most intensely provoking and mortifying, that he should fall in love with her, after she had come in a menial capacity to my house. It is astonishing, how awkwardly things turn out ! Perhaps, Madame, had I the management of the affair again, I should act differently ; for it is an unpleasant thing for a woman at the brink of the grave, as I am, to have caused unhappiness to any one. However, I have nothing to do with it now ; I heard years ago, that Kate had denied any engagement to Devereux. Bettina Jones asked her the straightforward question, so I have it on the best authority."

" And I know, too," said Madame, " that she has refused some most excellent offers, which it is not likely she would have done had she not still been thinking of your son."

" I am sorry to hear it," said Mrs. Charteris ;

“ but I dare say that she is very romantic ! As to Devereux, I wish I had not opposed him ; he might have forgotten her by this time, had I let him alone. Is it not very strange, Madame, that he has not written one of us a line for the last six months ? Do you think it possible he can now be on his way home ? I wish he had not told me in his last letter from New York, that he talked of going to the Rocky Mountains,—it was very foolish to say any thing about it,—he might so easily have kept it a secret, till his return.”

“ And yet,” said Madame, “ supposing you had not known that he had gone on this excursion, how much more uneasy you might have been ; because you would then be unable to account for the cessation of his correspondence, which now must appear quite natural.”

“ My poor boy ! ” exclaimed Mrs. Charteris, “ my poor boy ! God grant I may see him before I die ! Sometimes I think, Madame,

that I have done my duty, and sometimes I think I have not, in this affair. I am not so steadfast, and firm, and strong in my opinions now-a-days, as I used to be. I am of two minds, Madame ; I waver and falter. I am failing fast, and I know it. The weakness of childhood seems at times to be stealing over me!"

"Far, far from that, my dear friend," said Madame, trying to force a smile ; "your body has become weaker lately, and you are very nervous ; but your mind is as vigorous as ever. God grant it may always continue so."

"God grant it," responded Mrs. Charteris ; "for indeed sometimes I feel such a confusion about me, that it makes me tremble. But nothing strikes me as more singular than the entirely different aspect under which I appear to see various events of my past life at different times. Sometimes I think I have done well, and congratulate myself upon having maintained a steady, unfaltering course through-

out, never flinching from my principles. Then I change my opinion, or rather begin to question it, and ask myself: would it not have been better for us all, had I been kinder to Devereux some years ago? Poor boy! poor boy! The thought of him falls heavy on my heart,—heavy as lead!"

"Why not resolve once for all, Mrs. Charteris, that when he does return, you will make up to him for the past?" exclaimed Madame; "You can still recall it,—it is not irrevocable. He may be happy yet, and you can make him so."

"Don't speak of it," said Mrs. Charteris; "I dare say that by the time he comes home, he will have forgotten all about her. Far be it from me to put her into his head again."

"You may depend upon it," said Madame, looking grave, "that he will think of her; but not speak of her. He vowed when he went away, that he never would breathe her name again to you. So do not flatter yourself, my

dear lady, that because he may be silent, he will not feel."

"And do you really suppose, Madame," exclaimed Mrs. Charteris, indignantly, "that when my dear son comes home, as soon he will, I feel convinced, it will be my duty to open old wounds afresh, and try to stir up in his breast the remembrance of what I may call his boyish affection? Consider, it is now nearly four years since he left me—much may have happened in that time. I trust—I hope in God that his ideas and feelings are altogether changed."

"God grant it may be so," ejaculated Madame; "since you are so determined!"

"And yet I am not *determined*," said Mrs. Charteris, looking annoyed; "I may change if I see good cause for it. But, certainly, I shall do nothing rashly or imprudently. If he still remember Kate Devereux, I shall not at once give in; but see, whether a mother's influence can, at the last hour, avail."

“In short,” said Madame, warmly, “you are still determined to tamper with your son’s happiness, and, if you can, you will make him sacrifice the hopes of his life!”

“Leave the room, Madame!” said Mrs. Charteris, in an agitated tone; “I wish to calm myself, and think this over alone!”

The Frenchwoman, though she looked surprised, and as though she considered her dismissal very abrupt, left the room without replying a word, and Mrs. Charteris, wringing her hands, continued to herself,—

“Poor boy! poor boy! Oh, that he were at home! To get him home again, I would consent to anything! Yes! almost to let him marry her! Poor boy! Come home to me again, Devereux! come home!”

The old lady gradually relapsed into silence, while her imagination wandered to the far west, and she tried to picture to herself what her son might even then be doing. Visions of boundless prairies, wild Indians, savage

animals, the rattle snake, the poisoned arrow, the woods on fire, rose vividly before her, to the exclusion of anything more pleasing.

“ This won’t do at all ! ” at last she exclaimed ; “ I must think on something else, or I shall go mad ! I dare say this is pure nervousness ; ten to one my boy is on his way home, and that is the reason he has not written.”

At this moment a loud knock was heard at the entrance door, which, in her present over-excited state, made her start.

“ O, dear ! O, dear ! ” she exclaimed ; “ how many knocks shall I hear before *his* knock comes ! And yet I think I shall know it when I hear it again. They did remind me of him, too. But what nonsense ! What folly ! He would write from New York or some other port, before he set sail, doubtless ! ”

Mrs. Charteris, from the place where she was sitting, could hear a considerable bustle at the door, so she rang the bell to know what it meant.

As the page opened the door of her sitting-room, she could just overhear the porter say to some stranger, whom he was ushering in to an adjoining apartment,—

“ This way, sir, if you please—Madame de Beaurovoir will be with you presently.”

Mrs. Charteris gave a sigh; she had taken it into her head that something pleasant had happened, or was about to happen, to break the monotony of her wearisome existence, and she was disappointed to find that it was only some morning visitor to Madame. The page was dismissed, and she relapsed into her reverie. She was roused from it at last, by her companion’s entrance.

“ I beg pardon for disturbing you, Mrs. Charteris,” said she, “ particularly after your saying that you wished to be alone. But, I have had a visitor, who has given me such pleasant accounts from America, that I thought you would be glad to hear them at once. He has just crossed the Atlantic; saw your son a

few weeks ago at Cincinnati ; says he is looking very well, and that he talks of returning."

Madame de Beaurevoir, whose expressive countenance was beaming with pleasure, paused while she looked inquiringly in the face of her friend.

"My God!" exclaimed Mrs. Charteris, "How happy you have made me! But, why don't you bring in your friend to see me? I should like to make his acquaintance ;—what is his name?"

"He says," continued Madame, with a smile, "that Devereux must by this time be on his way home—you will see himself, doubtless, within a few days!"

"It is too much! It is too much!" exclaimed Mrs. Charteris, bursting into tears; "You are deceiving me! Where is Devereux? You know where he is!"

"I do know where he is," rejoined Madame, "and I have reason to hope you will see him before to-morrow is over. Do calm

yourself, my dear friend—keep tranquil, and you shall hear all about it."

Mrs. Charteris looked fixedly in Madame's happy eyes, but though they struggled hard, they could not keep their secret. It was no use, Madame could not restrain a smile, nor prevent a glow suffusing her face.—

" You have found me out, Mrs. Charteris, at last," she said ; " he *is* here! He is in the house!"

With a cry, the mother, forgetting her infirmities and her weakness, rushed forward. Devereux was already at the door, and received her in his arms, while Madame hurried out of the room, and left them alone.

Devereux was indeed an altered man ; he looked ten years older, his mother fancied, than when she had seen him last ; but that might be the result of travel and fatigue. His frame was broader and more athletic, and his skin was browned by exposure ; his countenance was graver, more manly and determined ; his

blithe and joyous look was gone, but to make up for it, there was more depth and earnestness in his expression. His mother sighed as she observed that his brow was not so smooth as it had been, and that there was a compression about his lips, which she had never before remarked.

“ You scan me narrowly, mother !” he at last exclaimed ; “ Am I much altered ? Or what is it you observe ?”

“ You are much changed, my son,” she replied ; “ whether for better or worse I can scarcely say, till I am longer with you. You have certainly lost the frank, jovial expression, which used to be the characteristic of your countenance, and in its place you have assumed a gravity, I should almost term it, a sternness, were it not for your eyes, that have still their old affectionate look about them !”

“ Always affectionate, and always kind to you, my mother,” said Devereux, with a sigh ; “ changed as I may be to others.”

Mrs. Charteris looked at her son, as though she would like to question him, but on second thoughts, she decided it would be best to refrain at present; so, after a momentary pause, she changed the conversation to indifferent topics, and asked him a great deal about his late adventures, and how he had liked a wandering life.

“So well, mother,” he replied, “that but for you I had little inducement to return to this country, and might have been wandering among the Indians to this day.”

A shade passed over the old lady’s countenance as her son said this, and she remarked—

“It is a fortunate thing, that you have returned Devereux, as there are certain arrangements which I wish to make, relating to your future property, and it is necessary you should be on the spot to carry my intentions into execution.”

“You have only to command me, mother!” replied Devereux; “I am ready to do whatever

you may wish, with regard to any pecuniary arrangement."

" You are now nearly thirty, Devereux!" continued Mrs. Charteris; " It is surely time for you to give up the roving, rambling life which you have hitherto led. I wish you would settle in this country, and live like a country gentleman, respected and beloved, as your father did before you. I mean to give up to you, immediately, the Folkenham estates—a clear three-thousand-a-year—I have done as much for Lionel already! So, are you satisfied?"

" More than satisfied, my dear mother, with your generosity," replied Devereux ; " but before I can reply more fully, I must crave time for deliberation. You make me this most handsome offer, on condition that I settle down in England, as a quiet, country gentleman. In other circumstances, I might have done so most willingly—most happily—but not as I am at present. I have no taste for keeping open a

bachelor's hall, and it appears that Fate has decreed I am not to marry."

Mrs. Charteris' brow contracted, and her mouth twitched uneasily,—now was the time to act upon the good suggestions with which she had been inspired that morning,—but she could not make up her mind to do so, all at once. She would take farther time,—she would wait to see—whether this *mésalliance* was after all inevitable.

"We shall talk it over, my son ! We shall talk over your prospects," said Mrs. Charteris, hastily ; "I should not like you to marry beneath yourself,—but—but—but you will not be hasty, my son,—will you ?"

Devereux looked at his mother in surprise, her manner was so flurried, anxious, and altered. It was evident that sickness had greatly changed her nature, perhaps, softened it.

"Don't annoy yourself, mother," at last he

said ; “ I beg you will give yourself no trouble, planning for me. I have ceased to plan for myself, or to look forward at all ! ”

“ I give in, my son,—I yield to you,—marry whom you like ! In God’s name, be happy while you may,—and do not say, that your old mother has made you wretched ! ”

“ That I shall never say, mother ! ” replied her son, with a strange expression in his eyes, that frightened the old lady, while he forced a smile that was anything but joyous.

“ My day is gone by,” he continued ; “ time was, when your consent to my marriage would have made me happy ; but it is too late now ! ”

“ How ridiculous, my son ! ” exclaimed Mrs. Charteris ; “ You ought not to let pride stand in your way ! Pride is misplaced between a parent and a child ! I do not hesitate to confess now, that I regret my long opposition to your wishes ! Surely you are satisfied, Devereux, since I have made this acknow-

ledgement ! Embrace me, my son, and consent to be happy !”

Devereux laughed, but it was a bitter laugh, as he replied,—

“Consent to be happy, indeed ! You mistake the difficulty, mother ! It is not a question of my consent ! Kate Devereux is about to be married,—her intended is a Mr. Baron, whom she has met in Germany, where she has been residing during the last few months with Mrs. Castlemaine !”

“Baron ! Baron !” exclaimed Mrs. Charteris, “the name is very familiar to me ! Her father married a Baron, if I mistake not ! And, now I think of it, I saw the name yesterday morning, when cards, and a letter of introduction were sent me—‘Mr. and Miss Baron of Baronscliffe !’ The letter was from Lady Betty Hounslowe ! She says, they are of a very old English family,—the gentleman is immensely rich, having made a superb fortune in India. He is very eccentric, and his

daughter, who is lovely, and was quite the rage in Paris, is to be his heiress ! Can it be any relation of theirs that Kate Devereux is going to marry ?”

“No,” said Devereux, “it cannot be, for they called this young man her own cousin ! However, I neither know nor care ! It is nothing to me.”

“Of course, you will call upon the strangers for me ?” said his mother ; “I have no doubt their acquaintance will be a great acquisition ! I am so dull here !”

“Excuse me, mother,” he replied, “but I do not mean to form any new acquaintances during the period I am with you.”

Mrs. Charteris looked quite annoyed, but did not reply, and so the conversation dropped.

That evening, towards sunset, Devereux went out, to take a stroll on the esplanade, thinking too, that perhaps, he might meet some old acquaintance among the visitors to

the watering place. Very few had arrived, and, after taking a few turns up and down, he was preparing to return homewards, when his attention was arrested by two figures, a gentleman and lady, who were advancing towards him. The former, though he seemed rather elderly, had a fine erect figure, and looked gentlemanly ; but his complexion was very dark, and his whole bearing stiff. The lady had on a rich black veil, which she wore down, but her walk, the turn of her head, and the tone of her voice, were all familiar to him, and vividly recalled an early friend.

“It must,—it must be she !” his heart suggested ; “I will speak to her, though it should be for the last time !”

The scene takes longer to describe than it did to occur. He advanced with hurried step towards them, they hesitated, not knowing whether he was coming up to address them, or some one behind.

“Kate !” he exclaimed, as he held out his hand.

“ You mistake me !” said the lady, as she drew herself up, and attempted to pass on.

The voice and manner were certainly Kate’s, there could be no mistake ! Poor Devereux muttered something and staggered against the wall. When he recovered himself he walked on, but it was in the wrong direction, and he was obliged to pass the couple once more, before he could return home. To his surprise, although he tried to avoid them, they now came up, and addressed him. The gentleman who had meantime discovered Devereux’ name from a friend, introduced himself to him as “ Mr. Baron, of Baronscliffe,” and the lady who accompanied him as “ Miss Baron.” Devereux had been so firmly persuaded of Kate’s identity, that he could scarcely believe his ears, and when Annie raised her veil, he look so fixedly in her face, so sadly, so earnestly, and as she thought, so mysteriously, that the blood rushed to her temples, and suffused her countenance with crimson. It speedily passed away, and

left her skin so transparent and delicate that Devereux could see to advantage her exquisite features, and her soft golden, brown curls so that he mentally exclaimed, that he had never in his whole life beheld such a lovely creature!

But it is high time to explain how Devereux happened to know that Kate was going to be married ; or rather, what induced him to say so to his mother. His correspondence with Mrs. Marjory had necessarily been much interrupted by his travels, as he seldom could tell her where to address. His three last letters to her from America had either remained unanswered, or the replies had been mislaid. He had written a fortnight before sailing for home, requesting that a letter might be in waiting for him, at the Liverpool post-office, which he might get immediately on his return, to assure him that all was well. He inquired for it accordingly, but there was no letter there ! He then took a post-chaise, and proceeded to Bird's-nest ; for the agony of suspense, under which he laboured,

was insupportable. Bird's-nest was shut up, with the exception of a few back apartments, tenanted by the old housekeeper, Mrs. Burnet. She was delighted to see him, and expressed great regret that her ladies were absent. Amongst other gossip, she remarked :—

“ You will be glad to hear sir, that Miss Kate is to be married at last ! At least, so I hear, from the ladies' maid ! And time for her too, sir, if she ever meant to be ! I believe she has had no lack of offers, first and last ; but I always thought, sir, and I often said it, though not of course to the young lady herself, (for I know my place), that she was too difficult !—And that she had either a lot of pride, or something on her mind !—However, she is positively to be married at last ! God bless her ! And to a Mr. Baron, Jemima says,—a very nice looking young man, tall and comely, I hear. But I should have expected something more aristocratic for Miss Kate,—in foreign arts, too ! She ought to have picked up a

Count or a Marquis, at the least. They say this young man is very rich, though a banker or something of the kind. They met him at Vienna, and he made up to Miss Kate, like an old acquaintance, Jemima says. Miss Kate was so glad to see him, she turned rosy red, and nearly dropped, they wrote me. Jemima was walking with them at the time, for Mrs. Marjory is not so strong as she has been, and she has always to lean on her maid's arm ; Mrs. Marjory drags a little on one side now, sir."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Devereux, trying to command his countenance ; "how long is it since she has been ill?"

"She has never been so, to say ill, sir," replied the housekeeper ; "but she has had this weakness coming on since she went abroad. They met Mr. Baron as they were passing through Vienna, on their way to some baths, as they call them. He accompanied them there, I hear, in order, no doubt, to pop the question."

“ When is Miss Kate to be married ? ” asked Devereux, struggling, without success, to repress any symptoms of agitation.

“ Jemima does not say, sir ! ” replied Mrs. Burnett ; “ but bless me ! you are like death, sir ! May I get you a glass of wine ? ”

Devereux excused himself, and departed.

CHAPTER II.

“ I say we must not
So strain our judgment, or corrupt our hope,
To prostitute our past-cure malady
To empiricks.”
All's Well that Ends Well.

MY dear mother!” said Kate to Mrs. Marjory, for latterly the old lady had insisted on Kate calling her by that endearing appellation; “ my dear mother, I doubt if the baths are doing you any good! I don’t think you are at all stronger, since the first ten days we were here! Would it not be better to

return to England ? I have more faith in English, than in foreign doctors !”

“ Do not think of me, my love,” said Mrs. Marjory ; “ I am well enough ! We have heard nothing, since we left England, of these wretched convicts. On your account, I should think it better to remain abroad a little longer.”

“ No, my dear mother, you must not think of me in the matter at all !” said Kate ; “ I believe I was very silly to be so apprehensive, and, perhaps, a little selfish too, in allowing you to be at so much fatigue and expense, on account of my whims. I am come to my senses now, and am most sincerely anxious, to see you once more on English ground, and under a good medical man.”

“ But, Mr. Baron, Kate ! I have no objection to the proposal, if he will accompany us.”

“ Accompany us, mamma !” exclaimed Kate ; “ why should he accompany us ? We don’t want him !”

"My dear girl," said Mrs. Marjory, "are you the only one so blind, as not to see that he is devoted to you?"

Kate blushed, as she replied, "It would be absurd in me to deny that I am aware of his sentiments; though he has not, in direct terms, made me an offer at present. But an offer is the very thing I wish to avoid,—I have no desire to subject him to the pain of a refusal."

"But, my dear Kate," said Mrs. Marjory, "you have told me yourself, long ago, that you had given up all idea of Devereux, whose silence for the last year and a half has indeed been most unaccountable; I commended your wisdom in so doing, and fondly hoped, that you had succeeded in eradicating him from your memory. I am most anxious, Kate, to see you settled in life, before I die. I feel that my course in this world will not be very long; and happy, indeed, would it make me, to know that you were under the protection

of a kind and honorable man, of suitable age and fortune, of excellent character, and who, if my poor judgment does not mislead me, is congenial to you in mind, disposition, and cultivation. Now, Kate, what have you to say against it? Are you mad enough to believe that Devereux still loves you,—or, if he does, that his mother will ever consent to let you be his wife?"

"I have given up all ideas of the kind long ago!" replied Kate, in a low voice, as she turned away her head.

"Don't you like Mr. Baron, then, my child?" rejoined Mrs. Marjory; "Surely it was to please you, that I permitted this intimacy at first,—you spoke of him so highly, and appeared so delighted to see him again,—in short you have seemed on such brotherly terms with him throughout, that if you do not care for him, I have been completely mystified and deceived!"

"If I have deceived you, I am very sorry for it, mamma!" replied Kate; "I was far

from meaning to do so ! I would, indeed, feel towards John Baron, as to an elder brother, if he would only let me,—but he places a barrier between us, by thinking of forming a nearer tie, one to which I will never consent ! No, Mrs. Marjory,—I have loved once,—and I cannot transfer my affections to suit my interest, even although I may have been unfortunate in the object, on whom I have placed them !”

Kate turned away her head, to conceal the tears, that started unbidden.

“ Don’t grieve, my dear Kate !” said Mrs. Marjory, rising to kiss her ; “ We shall set off for England to-morrow ; I see that it is no use remaining here !” And the good old lady sighed deeply.

“ You will see Mr. Baron for me this evening, will you not, dear Mrs. Marjory ? I cannot bear the thoughts of saying farewell to him ! He was so loved, too, by my father ! The sight of him, since our sojourn here, has

recalled to me so vividly our household, long ago, formerly so happy, now so scattered by death and altered circumstances, that really I can scarcely decide, whether it has been a source of greater pain or pleasure ! I would not now give him pain,—no,—not for the world !”

“ I can see him for you, if you wish it,” rejoined Mrs. Marjory ; “ but, no doubt, he will ask to see yourself, to bid you farewell, and it would be very cruel and unkind in you to refuse him !”

“ Poor John !” exclaimed Kate, “ there are few for whom I have a greater friendship !”

“ You are a little fool, Kate, to throw away your happiness thus” said Mrs. Marjory !

The day passed away, and evening arrived, without any tidings of Mr. Baron, which was the more extraordinary, as since their arrival at the baths he had been in the habit of passing part of every day with them. At last, Mrs. Marjory talked of going to bed, as they

were to rise very early next morning to, proceed on their journey. Before doing so, she called for writing materials, that she might pen a note to John Baron, and account for their hasty departure. Ere she had time to begin, the servant brought her a letter. It was from John himself, and dated from a town some miles distant, to say that he had been much shocked that morning to receive an intimation of the sudden death of his partner at Trieste. It was absolutely necessary for him to start for that place immediately, to prevent his affairs getting into inextricable confusion. Having met one of the servants, belonging to their hotel, just as he had finished reading his letter, he was told that the ladies were gone out, or he should have come to bid them adieu. He now took the opportunity of a delay in getting post-horses, to write a few hurried lines. Baron concluded, by hoping that their sojourn at the baths might be prolonged till he should be able to rejoin them ; or if not, that Mrs

Marjory would kindly write to his address at Trieste, and let him know their future movements.

"So, Kate, your troubles are over for the present!" exclaimed Mrs. Marjory, handing her the letter.

The next morning they set off. The first part of their route passed as smoothly as most other journeys, undertaken by rich English people who have servants to attend upon them, and couriers to pave the way before them. By the time they reached the Rhine, however, Mrs. Marjory began to feel very poorly ; she would at times get faint, lose her breath, and hardly be able to sit up. Her maid Jemima, whose strong arm had been of such assistance formerly, now became very negligent, and was often not to be found. When Kate reproved her for her absence, she would make some unmeaning excuse, and attempt to justify herself in a disagreeable way. Kate found all this very harassing ; Mrs. Marjory demanded her

constant care and attention, and she could not trust Jemima to do the least thing for her, since her wits seemed always astray ; nor could she venture to send her any message that required speed, as she always loitered half an hour if sent from one part of the steam-boat to another. At last Kate proposed to Mrs. Marjory that they should go ashore, and remain at some pleasant town, on the banks of the Rhine, till she should be re-established, and, if necessary, dismiss Jemima. To neither of these proposals would Mrs. Marjory consent. She was anxious, most anxious, to hurry back to England. She was counting every day,—every hour—till the happy time should arrive, when she should see again her native country. It was impossible to describe to Kate the longing that filled her soul. As to Jemima, bad as she was, she was better than a stranger, and she would keep her, at least till they reached home.

It made Kate uneasy, while it surprised her,

to observe the flushed, eager expression of Mrs. Marjory's countenance. A chilly, anxious foreboding told her that all was not right ; she again entreated her friend to go ashore, in order to get medical advice ; but her entreaties were in vain, the old lady assuring her that her faintness was only momentary. Kate remained standing, hesitating, very unwilling to yield her point, and yet afraid to insist further ; when Mrs. Marjory, anxious to put a stop to the discussion, requested her to fetch her reticule. It was not to be found ; doubtless Jemima had put it into some safe place, so Kate went in search of her to inquire for it.

“ You seek Miss Jemima, Mademoiselle, *n'est-ce-pas?* ” inquired the courier, as she passed ; and this man had hitherto been a staunch admirer of the black tresses and blue eyes of the Abigail.

“ It is won bad business ! Won deceitful man ! Won *corrompeur* ! Ah ! Bah ! *Mor-*

bleu!"—And the gentleman of the road made a grimace expressive of disgust.

"I don't understand you," said Kate.

"Pardon, Mademoiselle!" replied he; "this way,—this way, if your ladyship please;—come here, miladi! Behold! *Voilà!*"

And he pointed out Jemima, to Kate's astonished gaze, on the other side of the funnel and engine house, in animated conversation with a very showily dressed man, who wore enormous moustaches, and, though handsome, had a disagreeable physiognomy.

"Young ladies cannot do two things at once, Mademoiselle!" sagely observed the courier; "she ought to be attending her most amiable mistress, instead of wasting sweet looks upon won rascal. Shall I call her to you, Mademoiselle?"

"No!" said Kate, who half-provoked, and half amused, turned away, and rejoined Mrs. Marjory, to whom she related what she had seen. The old lady sent for Jemima directly,

and gave her a sharp reprimand, desiring her, for the remainder of the voyage, to remain within call, and attend to her duties. The reticule, meanwhile, could nowhere be found ; Jemima positively denied having seen it, while the courier asserted that he had observed it in her hand when she went to speak to the stranger, at the other side of the boat. The maid declared this to be an unfounded falsehood, invented out of jealousy, in order to punish her for speaking to an acquaintance.

On Mrs. Marjory desiring her to tell the name of her acquaintance, she burst into tears, sobbed so violently, that she could not articulate a word, and at last Kate was obliged to order her to retire, so fearful was she of undue excitement for the old lady. During the rest of the voyage Jemima remained very lachrymose and sulky ; but did not attempt to speak to her new admirer again. He hovered round the party, so that Kate several times had a good glimpse of him, and once she suspected

that there were notes passing between him and the maid. Kate's attention was painfully excited by his appearance; at one time he seemed perfectly strange to her, and yet at another there was a look which puzzled her, and made her think it was that of a person, whom she had seen before, but where, when, and how, she could not remember. Trying to recollect it, she looked oftener at the man than she would otherwise have done; he observed this, at last, but instead of returning an impudent look, which, from his style and air, might have been expected, he turned abruptly away. The only other time Kate observed him, was on one occasion, when a rush being made to the side of the vessel, to witness passengers enter from a little boat, which had put off from one of the towns on the bank, she saw him hand in a female to go ashore as it returned. The appearance of the latter was so remarkable that she could not fail to observe her, and, indeed, it was matter

of astonishment to Kate, that she had not previously taken notice of her in the boat. She was rather above the middle size, slight, and graceful ; her face, though still a fine one, showed that she was beyond middle age,—she had doubtless seen fifty summers, and they had not passed lightly over her head ; for the lines were deeply drawn across her forehead, and round the corners of her mouth, whispering tales of suffering and of deep passion, to those who would speculate curiously, on the rare beauty, that must once have been there. Beauty now there was none, but for a pair of magnificent black eyes, like living gems, whose flash literally blazed upon one. But for these glorious eyes, the haggard look of the lower part of the countenance would have rendered it almost ugly. There were only the boatmen and a child belonging to one of them, in the little skiff, when she stepped in. The child, a merry, happy, little creature, who had been laughing and tossing her arms to catch the

small coins, that some of the passengers were amusing themselves by throwing to her, the instant she saw the strange woman, gave a shriek, and hid her face with her hands.

“ Faith, that is a terrible-looking woman !” exclaimed one of the English passengers ; “ No wonder the child is frightened at such a pair of eyes !—Who on earth is she ?”

But no one replied to his query, for no one seemed to know. Suddenly Kate started up, and rushing to Jemima, pulled her to the side of the vessel, and pointing to the woman, exclaimed,—

“ What has she got in her hand ? Is not that Mrs. Castlemaine’s reticule ?”

Jemima strained her eyes in the direction to which Kate pointed, and did not reply for a minute, at last she said,—

“ It is very like it, ma’am ; but though it is the same colour, the clasp is different ; can’t you make it out, ma’am ?”

Though Kate had in general better eyes

than Jemima, yet in this instance they failed, and she could not make out the distinction, which the cunning handmaid had remarked.

“ I dare say, ma’am,” said the latter, “ that it is about Mrs. Castlemaine’s couch, and as soon as she gets up we shall find it.”

Fortunately there was nothing in the reticule but a pocket-handkerchief and a few letters. The latter were interesting to the old lady, but could not be so to a stranger, as they only contained family matters. The affair of the reticule was soon forgotten, and they thought no more of it. It had been arranged that they should spend the night at Aix-la-Chapelle, and next day proceed to Ostend, whence they could take the steamer to London. On arriving at the former town, they were much annoyed, by Jemima requesting her discharge, and asking for her wages.

“ Of course you will return to England with us!” said Mrs. Marjory; “ I am most unwilling

to leave a young and unprotected female, like yourself, alone on the continent."

"I shall neither be alone nor unprotected, ma'am!" replied Jemima, with a blush and a simper; "I am going to change my name, ma'am. Me and a young man, ma'am, have agreed to marry, for better or worse."

"You had better wait till you get home," said Mrs. Marjory, "and let the young man follow you."

"I am very sorry, ma'am, to disoblige you," answered Jemima, "but we could not do that on no account.—Father might make objections when we got home, and besides, the young man might alter his mind."

"If there is any risk of his altering his mind," rejoined Mrs. Marjory, "I recommend you to have nothing to do with him. You had better make up your mind to return to England, Jemima."

The tender-hearted maid took out her handkerchief and began to weep, murmuring some

thing in a pathetic strain, about the course of true love never running smooth, and that it would break her heart to be separated from her Fernando !

“ Your what ?—What is the man’s name ?” inquired Mrs. Marjory.

“ The chevalier Ferdinando Smithson !” replied the sobbing Abigail.

“ You are mad,” said her mistress, “ to think of marrying an adventurer. One can learn from his name what he is. However, you are five-and-twenty, and old enough to judge for yourself; so if you are bent on committing such a piece of folly, you shall have your wages.”

Jemima sobbed out her gratitude to her kind mistress, whom she was now deserting, and was paid off accordingly. Mrs. Marjory then sent for the mistress of the hotel, to speak to her, that she might make inquiries about another attendant to accompany them, at least to London.

“ What a pity,” exclaimed the hostess, a pleasant, good-natured looking woman, who spoke English very well, “ what a pity I did not know two hours ago that Mesdames were in want of an attendant! There was such a nice lady’s maid passed through here only this afternoon, and asked me if I knew of any one requiring a waiting maid. She is something more than a lady’s maid, something very, very superior,—one that would be an acquisition to Madame, to keep with her all her life.”

“ Is she English?” asked Kate.

“ Yes, Mademoiselle, she is English!” replied the hostess; “ her name is ‘Mrs. Dees.’ It is now ten years since I first saw her, and she has travelled up and down the Rhine several times since then—always with very great families! She was with the Portuguese Ambassador’s lady when I first knew her. She herself has got an uncle, a Spaniard! She is a very, very clever woman,—one magni-

fique female! She can speak several languages, and is such a good nurse! She knows all about sick people!" she continued, glancing at Mrs. Marjory, who was leaning back on the sofa, as if quite exhausted.

The officious hostess now hustled out of the room, and in a few minutes returned with some certificates in her hand.

"Pardon, Mademoiselle!" she said, as she handed them to Kate; "they are Mrs. Dees' testimonials, which she left with me. Will Mademoiselle have the goodness to read them to Madame?"

Kate did so, and both she and Mrs. Marjory agreed that they were most satisfactory. One was from the Portuguese Ambassadress, whose name sounded familiarly to Kate's ears, having heard it years before, from the Abbé de Dillon. Mrs. Dees had lived many years as confidential attendant in the house of the Ambassadress, and had left her seven years ago, on account of her health, to her

Excellency's very great regret. The other testimonials were from English ladies of distinction, whom she had served, and were couched in the most flattering terms.

"All this is very tantalizing," said Kate, "since I suppose it is impossible for us now to get this paragon of excellence. Did not you say she left the town two hours ago?"

"Yes, Mademoiselle," replied the hostess, "she did; but fortunately she is not very far off. Not above ten miles! She has gone to be present to-morrow at the nuptials of a relative, and to-day she prepares the house for the bride. But I shall send to her to-night, and she shall join you early in the morning."

The messenger was dispatched accordingly; while Mrs. Marjory and Kate discussed the singularity of the circumstance, that an Englishwoman, like Mrs. Dees, should have gone ten miles from Aix-la-Chapelle to help

to prepare the bride's cottage, as if there were no German women to do it.

"I must hear the whole story, as soon as she arrives," said Mrs. Marjory; "I dare say it is something very romantic, and interesting! I do hope this Mrs. Dees may be something out of the common! It will serve to amuse me!"

"If she prove a first rate lady's-maid, an experienced nurse, and a clever trust-worthy woman," said Kate, laughing, "she will certainly be out of the common; for the race of good old servants seems to be nearly extinct. I have no doubt she will be an amusing person also, for having travelled so much, if she is at all clever, she must have learned a great deal."

"Just what I have been thinking!" said Mrs. Marjory; "I only hope we may be able to secure her. Pray ring the bell, my love, and desire that we may be told, as soon as Madame Hagan's messenger returns."

It was about ten o'clock at night, when the post-boy came back, with the intelligence that Mrs. Dees was happy to engage herself to the English ladies, and would be with them next morning at eleven. Now this was a most inconvenient hour ; for either it would cause them to lose the steamer by which they had intended leaving Ostend, or else prevent Mrs. Marjory resting at all, before the voyage, which it was very necessary for her to do, on account of her weakness. So after a little consultation, it was at last agreed, that the two ladies should go on to the sea-port by the early train, and that Mrs. Dees should follow them in the afternoon, Madame Hagan having pledged her word that she would see her off.

During the journey, Mrs. Marjory could think and speak of nothing but Mrs. Dees, and on reaching Ostend, betrayed the most childish impatience for her arrival. Altogether her manner regarding her was so unlike herself, that Kate could not help feeling surprised.

“I want to see that woman, Kate!” exclaimed Mrs. Marjory; “it seems to me that Providence is sending her to me, for some purpose! I was dreaming about her last night, Kate!” continued Mrs. Marjory; “I thought I was dead, and that she was laying me out!”

“My dear mother, for heaven’s sake, do not speak so gloomily! Your nerves are unstrung, and your over-fatigue and weakness produce such melancholy dreams by night.”

“I do feel weak and exhausted, Kate,” said the old lady, “but you mistake me, if you suppose I am dispirited; on the contrary, I feel as though I were on the brink of a pleasant change. I could lay me down and rest very happily, Kate; for my life is beginning now to be a burden to me, and I should be very weary of it, if it were not for you. I do not like to leave you alone, my child! What will you do with yourself, when I am gone?”

“My dearest mother,” exclaimed Kate, bursting into tears, “for heaven’s sake, cease talking this way! I am not a coward, mamma, and if it is necessary to speak of death, I can do it. But why agitate yourself now, and torture me? You know you are not ill,—you are only tired.”

Kate threw her arms round Mrs. Marjory’s neck, and sobbed on her shoulder; then suddenly disengaging herself, she looked anxiously in her face, and exclaimed :

“Tell me, only tell me that you are not ill? Or speak out, dear mother, and explain the meaning of these hints!”

Mrs. Marjory kissed her, and making her sit down, replied :

“I shall see a doctor in London, and after I hear the meaning of my own strange symptoms, I will tell you every thing.”

Kate exclaimed :

“Tell me now! tell me now, for God’s sake!”

But Mrs. Marjory getting up from the sofa, walked to the window and looked out.

“Here she is, I dare say!” she said, pointing down the street, for she was anxious to turn the subject, and avoid answering; “what a fine-looking woman! Only look at her, Kate! I feel convinced it is Mrs. Dees! She is like the person I saw last night!”

Poor Kate hid her face on the cushions of the sofa, and wept.

Mrs. Marjory proved correct, for the *garçon* entered shortly afterwards, and announced that a lady who had arrived by the last train, desired to speak to them. As Kate was in no state to be seen, Mrs. Marjory arranged to speak to the person in another room. Kate mastered her agitaton as fast as she could, and in a few minutes followed the old lady. When she entered, the latter was sitting facing the door, while Mrs. Dees stood before her, replying to her questions. The new hand-maid was tall and slight, dressed in very rich

and stiff, though rather rusty, figured black silk. Her head-dress was very peculiar, consisting of a small cap, which scarcely confined an enormous quantity of hair, once jet black, but now thickly sprinkled with silver, and still elaborately plaited. Over this she wore a black silk scarf, fringed with deep lace, of rich material, though brown with age. It fell in folds down the back and sides of her head, and gave her, in Kate's eyes, a very antique, Spanish-duenna appearance.

“ Kate, my love, this is Mrs. Dees!” said Mrs. Marjory.

Kate came forward prepared to be pleased, but gave an involuntary start as Mrs. Dees turned round, and she recognized the singularly striking countenance that had made such an impression on her the day before, and that belonged to the person, who carried the suspicious-looking reticule. Mrs. Dees observed the impression she had made, and, quick as lightning, replied to it :

“ Mademoiselle recognizes me,—I was in the steam-boat, yesterday, with you, Mesdames, and had the misfortune to carry off a reticule, belonging to one of you ladies, by mistake, for my own. I was very, very much grieved about it, when I discovered what I had done.”

“ It is of no consequence now!” replied Mrs. Marjory, who seemed to regard her with singular interest, and kept her eyes fixed upon her face as though fascinated;—“ but are not you a foreigner, though your name is English? You speak with a foreign accent!”

“ I beg your pardon, Madame, my real name is Mariana Diaz, though, when serving English families, I am generally called Mrs. Dees. My parentage is half English, half Spanish, and my relations belong to both countries.”

“ What situation did you hold in the household of the Marchioness di Valdigamas?” asked Kate.

“ I attended her Excellency, as nurse, during a very serious illness, in which her life was for some weeks despaired of, and afterwards remained with her as personal attendant. She was very kind to me, and I wish, from the bottom of my heart, that I had never left her.”

“ Why did you leave her ?” asked Mrs. Marjory.

“ I was not in good health, and we had also some difference on the score of religion !” replied Mrs. Dees ; “ her Excellency, though very amiable, is a bigoted Catholic ; she was anxious that I should conform to her belief.”

As Mrs. Marjory made a point of never catechising people on their articles of faith, she let the conversation drop ; and, indeed, it was time to do so, as it only wanted twenty minutes of the hour for embarkation.

They had secured a little private cabin to themselves, and the old lady immediately

began to prepare for rest, as she was very tired, and unable to sit up. Kate had to leave her under the charge of Mrs. Dees, for she was obliged to go on deck herself. The new handmaid was so quick and dexterous that Mrs. Marjory was delighted, and she could not have been better served, had Mrs. Dees been in the habit of attending upon her all her life.

“ How old are you ? ” asked Mrs. Marjory, for she was puzzled with the discrepancy between her extreme activity and the traces of age, imprinted on her face.

“ I am fifty-one, madam,” replied Mrs. Dees ; “ but I have lived so much in warm countries, and been exposed to so many vicissitudes and privations in my day, that I dare say I look older. I was a soldier’s wife, ma’am, and followed the camp for seven years.”

“ Your face looks older than fifty-one,” said Mrs. Marjory ; “ but your figure is much

more youthful;—there is no trace of age there!"

"Age falls lightly upon such a spare habit as mine, Madam. I have a great deal of vitality and power of endurance,—it takes much to fatigue me! With me the spirit masters the flesh."

"But you must sometimes have felt fatigue, when following the camp!" rejoined Mrs. Marjory, with a smile; "The spirit must have been obliged to yield to the flesh, occasionally, after a long day's march, I should think! Did you never give in? Were you never tired out?"

"No, madam," said Mrs. Dees, with a peculiar smile; "my spirit could always keep up my body, and prevent its powers flagging, when I had an end in view. However, I know I speak strangely—you must think me odd,—but when you come to know me better, you will understand me."

By this time, Mrs. Marjory had got into the

little berth, and appeared comfortable for the night.

“Now that I have done all I can for you, madam, shall I say good night, or sit with you a little?” said Mrs. Dees.

“Oh, sit with me a little, by all means!” replied Mrs. Marjory; “I want to hear a little more about the triumph of mind over matter.”

“As you are now my mistress, madam, I consider it my duty to be candid,” replied her singular attendant; “through my father, I am connected with a certain Spanish family, who have, for several generations, possessed some strange information with regard to the properties of herbs. Through them, I am in possession of a medicine, which renovates the system, and makes it a stranger to fatigue.”

“Have you often taken it?” asked Mrs. Marjory; “and are you sure that it is quite innocent?”

“I have taken it many times,” replied Mrs.

Dees, "and can vouch for its efficacy; it is so harmless, that you might give it to a child."

"Let me have some directly!" said Mrs. Marjory, whose foible was a fondness for novelty, and who loved to try all sorts of experiments; "now, if it do me any harm, I shall never trust you again, Mrs. Dees!"

The countenance of the strange Abigail lighted up with satisfaction, as she hastened to obey. The draught was mixed, and Mrs. Marjory had just drank it off, when Kate entered the cabin.

"Mrs. Dees is doctoring me already, you see, Kate," exclaimed the old lady; "she ought to be proud of having won my confidence so quickly!"

"So I should think," replied Kate, with a look of dismay, as she examined the remains in the cup, which emitted a strong and very agreeable odour.

"Mademoiselle has no faith, I perceive!"

remarked Mrs. Dees, with a shrug; "but, to-morrow, when she sees how well Mrs. Marjory finds herself, she will be quite satisfied."

"I trust in God that I may be so!" replied Kate, looking steadily in Mrs. Dees' face, who turned away, and would not meet her eye.

"Really, I am astonished," continued Kate, who felt very indignant, "that you, a stranger, should take such a liberty, as to propose to your mistress, the very first evening of your entering her service, to swallow your abominable quack remedies!"

"And you, dear Mrs. Marjory," she continued, "how could you be so mad, as to take anything from that woman?"

"Kate, my love," replied the old lady, "you are getting too excited! Have you forgotten, that I am quite competent to judge for myself, as to what I ought to take? Mrs. Dees is in no wise to blame; however, she

may retire, and you had better come to bed now."

Poor Kate lay awake till nearly dawn ; the tears were dropping fast from her eyes, though she did not cry audibly, for fear of disturbing Mrs. Marjory. She grieved, because the old lady was evidently failing fast, and she much feared, that the time of her sojourn in this world would be but short. She was annoyed, too, because they had taken Mrs. Dees, of whom she had formed an unpleasant impression, and she now revolved in her mind different plans for getting quit of her, though she was afraid that Mrs. Marjory would, in this instance, be difficult to manage, as she had seemed to dislike her interference about the medicine.

The next morning Kate rose early, and went on deck. She walked up and down, revolving the subject of her last night's meditations, and the longer she thought, the more she felt that she disliked Mrs. Dees.

"She will make us all unhappy!" at last

she exclaimed aloud; “I must get quit of her, for the old lady’s sake, who is as imaginative and excitable as a girl of nineteen !”

“Imagination is a dangerous gift, Miss Devereux !” softly enunciated a voice which made Kate start ; “but, when well regulated, it is a source of unspeakable happiness to the possessor.”

Kate turned round quickly, and beheld Mrs. Dees, who had glided unheard, with her peculiar, leopard-like, Spanish tread, towards her.

“I beg your pardon, Miss Devereux !” said she, looking quite unconscious of having overheard anything disagreeable ; “I hope I have not startled you ! As we shall be in London in a few hours, I thought I would take the liberty, now, of offering my services. You will find me a very safe person, I assure you, ma’am. I have crossed the Channel, at least thirty times before, and have always made

myself useful to those ladies, who have placed confidence in me."

"I do not in the least understand you," replied Kate ; "there is nothing in which I require your services ; and if I did, of course, I could not place confidence in a person whom I have only known sixteen hours."

"You are unduly suspicious, Miss Devereux,—excuse my saying so!" said Mrs. Dees. "My testimonials, I should think, particularly that from the Marchioness de Valdigamas, are surely sufficiently high, to warranty our good opinion of me!"

"It is not right," said Kate, "to form opinions of people, either for good or bad, on first acquaintance. In your case it is unnecessary, as I am not called upon to judge you."

"Excuse me, my dear young lady," continued Mrs. Dees, in a coaxing tone of voice, which she fully expected would win its way at once to Kate's heart, "since you compel me to

be explicit, I can only say that you will find me at your service, if you have any silks, laces, or jewellery, that you are apprehensive may be seized at the Custom House ! I shall be only too happy to pass them for you ; believe me, I am accustomed to it !”

“Of that I have no doubt!” replied Kate, with curling lip ; “I assure, you once for all, that I do not require your services.”

She turned abruptly round, as she said so, and ran down the cabin stairs to Mrs. Marjory, leaving Mrs. Dees, looking rather discomfited, and with a more vindictive expression of countenance, than she would have liked her mistress to see.

“Oh ! Kate, I feel so well to day ! So invigorated ! Mrs. Dees’ medicine has given me new life !” exclaimed Mrs. Marjory, as Kate entered the little state cabin.

“I am sorry to hear that you are pleased with it !” said Kate ; “for my part, I think that she is a very dangerous woman, and that

it is running a great risk, to take her medicine."

"My dear child, you are most unreasonable!" exclaimed the old lady; "I feel so very much better this morning, that if I could adequately describe my sensations, so as to make you realize them, you would feel indebted to Mrs. Dees, for having done me so much good!"

"Well, mamma, I am, at least, glad that you are feeling well, and, if you continue to do so, I shall not find fault with Mrs. Dees. But I do really wish, from my heart, that you had more of my caution. Your confiding, trusting nature renders you positively younger than I am!"

"Don't abuse my confiding, trusting nature, Kate!" said Mrs. Marjory, laughing gaily; "remember that it made me fall in love with you at first sight! You, of all people, ought not to find fault with it!"

Kate replied by throwing her arms round

the old lady's neck, and kissing her. It was some moments before she disengaged herself.

"You naughty girl!" exclaimed Mrs. Marjory; "What do I feel upon my shoulder? Are you actually crying, because your mother chooses, now and then, to take her own way, and not consult you?"

"No, mother dear, I am not such a fool! But I do confess, that I was grieved last night, because I thought you were displeased with my interference,—however, it is all right now, and I am content."

"Are you penitent?" archly inquired Mrs. Marjory.

"Partly so!" replied Kate.

"Then prove your penitence," said the old lady, "by handing me my medicine bottle! It is time to take six drops more."

Kate obeyed, but she sighed as she did so. She had soon to leave the cabin again, as Mrs. Marjory proposed to get up, and desired Mrs. Dees to come and dress her. In about an

hour's time, she made her appearance upon deck, and joined Kate, looking so well, her eyes so bright, and with such a colour in her cheeks, that Kate was delighted.

“I have not felt so well for weeks before!” was her first observation; “Certainly she is a valuable woman. She has so much information, Kate, and talks so well, too! I half think she is a Jewess, for I have gathered that there are some strange secrets in her family, and there is something Oriental in her look,—is there not, Kate?”

“There is something very singular and un-english about her!” said Kate; “her appearance does not altogether please me, I must confess.”

“I never knew you so fanciful before, Kate!” remarked the old lady. “What can the poor woman have done to prejudice you? If you are going to be so dissatisfied with everything she does, I had better get quit of her, as soon as we get to London! For any-

thing will be better, than seeing you look unhappy!"

"Do not dismiss her on my account, my dear mother!" said Kate; "I shall be quite satisfied to see her in your service, if you will only be cautious with regard to her. She may be a valuable person, or she may turn out an adventuress! All I say is, that we ought to have our eyes open!"

Kate then proceeded to relate her suspicions, with regard to the abstraction of the reticule; she also described the conversation, that had taken place that morning between them. Mrs. Marjory did not appear to attach importance to either circumstance, but relieved Kate's mind a little, by promising to be cautious.

By the evening, they were comfortably settled in an hotel, at the 'West End;' Mrs. Marjory, however, was not so well; she complained much of palpitation of the heart, which at times increased to a degree, that was quite

frightful. A doctor of eminence was sent for, and, when he came, he did not seem to apprehend immediate danger; but he frankly confessed, that he would require a few days to study the case, and watch the effect of his medicines. He whispered to Kate, as he departed, that he feared it was not one disorder alone, from which Mrs. Castlemaine was suffering; he rather apprehended a complication of diseases, which would render her recovery, to say the least, tedious. Kate administered the prescribed remedies with her own hands, and proposed sitting up with Mrs. Marjory, to repeat the doses at the proper hours, but to this the old lady obstinately refused to consent. Already she felt better, and said that Mrs. Dees, who was to sleep in the same room, was quite sufficient to attend to her; so Kate was forced, in spite of herself, to go to bed. The next morning she arose with the dawn, dressed herself, and stole down to the sick chamber. Mrs. Dees rose up from a table

where she had been writing, as Kate entered, and, with a look of satisfaction, pointed to the bed, where the patient was sleeping soundly. When Mrs. Marjory awoke, she was certainly much better, and the physician expressed himself much pleased with what he termed, her temporary amendment, but he took occasion to speak to Kate, in private, before his departure, and cautioned her not to be deceived, and fancy, too quickly, that all danger was over. He strongly advised, that the patient should remain in London, a week or two, under his care.

“ I am not going to remain in London, a week or two, if it can be helped!” exclaimed Mrs. Marjory, when Kate repeated part of what the doctor had said; “ I detest this labyrinth of brick and mortar! I long for the country and the free air! Kate, we must change our lodgings as soon as I can move!”

“ To that, I am sure, there can be no objection!” Kate replied, anxious to soothe her sick

friend; “ We can ask the doctor about it to-morrow. And don’t you think, my dear mother, that we ought to write to Mrs. Burnet to join us ?—she is such a good nurse, and so perfectly accustomed to your ways !”

Mrs. Dees eagerly watched Mrs. Marjory, to catch the reply.

“ I don’t know yet, Kate, what to decide upon, with regard to Mrs. Burnet,” she answered; “ she is absolutely necessary at Bird’s-nest, to keep things in order. Besides, I am most unwilling to take for granted, that I am to be kept in the metropolis so long as the physician would persuade me. A few days hence, it will be time enough to decide. I shall see, too, how Mrs. Dees gets on;” here Mrs. Marjory looked to her attendant and smiled; “ if she be fatigued with nursing and taking care of me; or, if, on the contrary, mind still triumph over matter !”

CHAPTER III.

“I venerate the man whose heart is warm,
Whose hands are pure, whose doctrine, and
whose life
Coincident, exhibit lucid proof
That he is honest in the sacred cause.”

COWPER.

SOME days passed, and they still remained at the same hotel. Mrs. Marjory, on the whole, got no worse, but she showed no striking improvement. If she seemed better at one time of the day, she was sure to be worse at another, and *vice versd.* Sometimes the strange beating of her heart would become

almost audible, at other times her pulse would die away, and be scarcely felt, she would become cold, and look almost inanimate. Mrs. Dees would then come and rub her limbs, which always seemed to do her good. Meantime the influence of the cunning servant seemed to wax stronger, daily. Mrs. Marjory would eat or drink nothing, but what was prepared by her hand; she made her give her her medicine, smooth her pillow, and perform every little office for her, till at last poor Kate found that she herself was quite set aside. It was incomprehensible!—It was magical!—What could be the cause? Kate pondered it over from morning till night, but without being able to make it out. And yet she could not blame Mrs. Marjory, who did not seem in the least to have cooled in her affection for her. It was only that she seemed to regard Mrs. Dees, as the more skilful nurse of the two, and that the latter had gained some extraordinary influence over her mind, and acquired a power

over her, that reminded Kate of magnetism. In fact, Mrs. Marjory, for the last day or two, seemed never easy but when Mrs. Dees was beside her. In vain Kate tried to secure a quiet chat, as in days of yore, with her old friend ; either Mrs. Dees made some excuse for coming into the room directly, or else the old lady sent for her, on some frivolous pretext. Whether it was altogether Mrs. Dees' fault, or that Mrs. Marjory had some reason for desiring to avoid being alone with Kate, the latter could not make out. The very idea of such a possibility made her very unhappy, and caused her to shed many tears in secret. Poor Kate! Her case was a hard one ! Having now lived six years alone with Mrs. Marjory, she had gradually become isolated from her own relatives ;—some were in India, others at school, Marian and her husband were just gone to America ;—to whom, then, could she apply,—to whom go for advice and assistance ? Mrs. Marjory had stood, for so long a time, in the

place of father, mother, protectress,—every thing; that now, when her support and guidance failed, Kate felt lost, bewildered, abandoned! Devereux, too,—where was he? Had he forgotten her? Would it not be folly, madness, insanity, to think any more of him? To whom, then, could she apply? She knew not. So, as a last recourse, she threw herself on her knees, and in the anguish of her heart, implored our common Father, to look down with pity on his child.

She found relief in a passionate flood of tears; how long she gave way to it she knew not, but at last she was roused by a knocking at her door. It was Mrs. Dees, who had come to tell her that Mrs. Castlemaine wished to speak to her. Kate started up joyfully, almost hoping that this might be an answer to her prayer, and that, perhaps, she was summoned to hear some good news. She dried her eyes hastily, and went to the old lady.

“Why do you shut yourself up so, my love?”

asked Mrs. Marjory ; “ is it out of a spice of *petite malice* that you are getting up a counter-plot—forming a little mystery of your own—and trying to excite my curiosity, in revenge for Mrs. Dees and myself having one or two little secrets between us ?”

Kate blushed, and the tears filled her eyes anew ; she knew not whether to take Mrs. Marjory’s badinage in jest or earnest, till she looked in the old lady’s face, and saw her looking so kindly and lovingly upon her, that she felt sure her playfulness was not meant to wound. So she dashed the tears from her eyes, and smiling, as cheerfully as it was possible for her wounded feelings to do, she replied,—

“ I have no secrets, dear Mrs. Marjory, and you are welcome to know all that passes in my room. I never used to have a thought concealed from you ; and I once fondly hoped that the confidence was mutual.”

“ Little fool ! little fool !” exclaimed Mrs.

Marjory, shaking her finger at her ; " now I have found out what is the matter. There is a little jealousy in the case! Believe me, Kate—my own Kate—you have no cause to be jealous of any human being. You hold the first place in my affections, and have done so for years. There is no need to be jealous of a person in a different rank of life, because she makes herself useful to me. She never can be your rival, or in any way interfere with your hold on my heart."

Kate sobbed as if her heart would break ; she was anxious to disclaim any unworthy jealousy, which was, indeed, altogether foreign to her noble nature, but she could not speak. She was hurt—she was wounded, because Mrs. Marjory had taken up such an idea ; and yet she felt how difficult—nay, how hopeless, it would be to convince her to the contrary. Hopeless indeed, unless she could prove to her, that she had reason for thinking ill of Mrs. Dees. Proof, however, she had none, although

she was convinced, in her own mind, that there was something far wrong about the woman.

“Kate, my dear, you must not weep!” said Mrs. Marjory, at last; “remember how weak I am; indeed, I cannot bear this excitement!”

Kate struggled hard to control her agitation, and the old lady went on :

“I called for you, my love, to speak to you about a most important matter, which nearly concerns your happiness, as well as my own peace and tranquillity of mind—I mean Mr. Baron. I have heard from him again; he is anxious to pay us a visit, as soon as his affairs are settled. How will you receive him, Kate?”

“As a kind friend, and as a brother, if he will allow me,” she replied; “but if he expect anything more, he will be lamentably disappointed!”

“I am sorry—very sorry, to hear you say so!” replied Mrs. Marjory; “I had hoped to be able to find in him a protector and guardian

for you, before I am called away! Kate, my health is very precarious! I do not feel that I ought to reckon upon my lease of life being much longer. Though, at the same time, I allow that there is a chance, and a very good chance too, of the remedies I am now taking being efficacious. So you see, I am not speaking in a desponding tone, although I wish to take precautions, in case of the worst happening."

The old lady looked in Kate's face with perfect calmness, as though she had been talking on the most ordinary subject, while the poor girl had the utmost difficulty in mastering her agitation.

"What say you, Kate? Will you give him a trial? Shall I write to him that he has some chance, if he should come to England? That you will talk to him and let him plead his own cause?"

Poor Kate was sadly tempted to say "Yes." Not that she felt that she could ever look upon

John Baron in the light of a lover; but to have a friend like him, a true, staunch, sterling friend would be such an advantage! It would get her out of her difficulties—it would put every thing right again in their little household! Mrs. Dees would fall into her proper position! John Baron's strong sense would show every thing in its true light to Mrs. Marjory! the latter would have a son; she would have a brother on whom to lean for advice and assistance—she would no longer feel alone and isolated!

“I may write to him, then, I suppose!” exclaimed Mrs. Marjory.

Kate still hesitated,—the answer was trembling on her lips, when the door opened. To her surprise and indignation, Mrs. Dees had the assurance to enter without knocking; and looking at Mrs. Marjory with her great eyes, which appeared to Kate full of some mysterious meaning, she said emphatically,

“It is the hour!”

The old lady started, and said in a hurried tone, to Kate, without waiting for the reply to her former question,—

“ You had better go, my love!” And then turning to Mrs. Dees, inquired, “ How long shall we be?”

“ Three hours at least,” she replied, “ during which we must not be disturbed on any account.”

Kate flushed scarlet, and was going to remonstrate, when Mrs. Marjory pointed to the door, and gave her such an appealing look, that she felt herself obliged to go at once. The door was immediately locked behind her; she overheard some whispering, and then all was silent.

“ What in the world can be going on!” exclaimed Kate to herself, as she retired to her own apartment; “ that is a horrid woman,— I have the worst opinion of her ;—and yet why do I say so? What do I know about her? I have no actual reason for saying so.

Oh ! that I had some friend !—Some counsellor ! Some one, whose advice I could ask !”

As she was thus meditating she heard a man’s voice in the hall,—it was the doctor, who, having been detained later than usual, had been no longer expected. She felt a glow of pleasure at the sound, for she thought “ now Mrs. Dees must necessarily be interrupted, and I am not sorry for it !”

The physician was shown into a parlour, while she went and knocked at Mrs. Marjory’s door. No answer was returned,—she knocked again without success. She then called to Mrs. Dees, and informed her in a loud voice, that Dr. Aberfeldy was waiting. The provoking woman gave no answer whatsoever, and not the slightest sound was to be heard. Kate got into a towering passion at the woman’s insolence, and rattled at the door till the house shook. It was only for a moment, for she remembered that Mrs. Marjory was there, and might be much displeased. She

stopped short, and held her breath to listen. She felt confident that she heard stealthy footsteps move across the room, and something heavy placed against the door, just as if some one were apprehensive it was going to be broken open. Kate felt very much inclined to call out,—

“ You may spare yourself the trouble, Mrs. Dees !” but on consideration, she thought it better to take no notice,—so she retired at once.

“ I am very sorry, doctor,” she said as she entered the parlour, “ that Mrs. Marjory, who did not expect a visit from you at this hour, is now particularly engaged.”

“ It is of no consequence, Miss Devereux !” said Dr. Aberfeldy ; “ my object in coming this afternoon, was not so much to see my patient, as to speak to you. You will excuse me, I am sure, if I speak to you in blunt terms,—you know physicians are privileged persons !”

Kate expressed her willingness to listen to whatever the doctor had to say, while her heart began to beat most violently ; she felt so excited by the idea that, perhaps, he was going to speak of Mrs. Dees. She was not mistaken, for he began as follows :—

“ I have not felt altogether satisfied, my dear young lady, during the last few days, with the result of my remedies. Do you make a point of giving them to Mrs. Castlemaine yourself, or are you certain that she takes them ? ”

“ Every thing passes through Mrs. Dees’ hands ! ” replied Kate ; “ I can be responsible for nothing ! ”

“ Then I beg to put you on your guard, Miss Devereux ! ” said the doctor, looking grave ; “ For the last day or two, I have felt convinced that Mrs. Castlemaine does not get the medicines I prescribe, and that other drugs, of a very potent nature, are administered to her.

Under these circumstances, I must decline visiting her again."

"It is not her fault, I am sure, it is ~~Mrs.~~ Dees!" exclaimed Kate, in great agitation; "Oh, doctor, do not desert us! Tell Mrs. Marjory your suspicions! Help me to get that woman turned out of the house!"

"It is not my place, my dear young lady," replied Dr. Aberfeldy, "to interfere between mistress and servant. You ought rather to warn your protectress of the dangerous character of the person, who is now attending her. However, perhaps, I am hasty in accusing Mrs. Dees. She may, perhaps, act by Mrs. Castlemaine's orders. On the whole, Miss Devereux, I think I had better retire from the scene, and let this be my last visit."

"Oh, sir, I entreat you not to act so hastily!" exclaimed Kate, taking the old physician's hand; "I assure you Mrs. Castlemaine is incapable of acting in such an unlady-like and

dishonorable manner, as to deceive you. Do come to-morrow, and tell her what you suspect, I implore you!"

"No, my dear, no!" replied the doctor, taking a pinch of snuff; "It is not my business! Besides, I hate a scene! You do not know the world, or you would not ask me. I have been treated in a most unprofessional manner throughout, and have nothing for it, but to refuse seeing the lady again! Good morning, Miss Devereux,—God bless you!"

And, so saying, the doctor hurried away, feeling very uneasy about his horses, that had been kept a longer time than usual waiting, and besides it was raining.

Kate was once more alone. Scarcely knowing what she was doing, she returned to the door of the sick room, and again tried the lock, but it was still fastened. Then she stopped short, and began thinking, that after all she was acting very ridiculously, for Mrs. Marjory was quite able to judge for herself,—

and what right had she to interfere, or to criticise the acts of her friend. She gradually became calmer as she considered this, and remained some time in a reverie.

“ After all,” she exclaimed, suddenly rousing herself, “ it is all very well to say that I have no right to criticise Mrs. Marjory’s actions,— and that I am very silly and foolish to take all this so much to heart,—and to hate that abominable woman Mrs. Dees: but my folly does not make her a less dangerous person; nor does my dislike to her render it less my duty to try to find out who and what she is, that I may put Mrs. Marjory on her guard.”

With these words, Kate rose up from her chair, dressed herself in walking costume, rang the bell, ordered a hackney coach, and desired the servants to inform Mrs. Castlemaine, should she want her, that she had gone out to execute some commissions. She drove straight to a retired street in the neighbourhood of Manchester Square, and, desiring the driver

to wait, got out. She looked again at the address in her pocket-book, and then hurried on. Entering a sombre-looking passage, that led into an old fashioned court, she stopped before an antique doorway, and knocked. It was opened by an aged female, very respectably dressed.

“Is the Abbé de Dillon at home?” inquired Kate, in a timid voice, while her colour went and came.

“He is, ma’am,” replied the female, as she looked at her narrowly; “but he will not be disengaged for more than an hour, perhaps not even then. This is his confession night, too, and the people will be here for him by six o’clock. But Father O’Donnell is at your service, miss, if you like—he is in his room now, waiting till he be called.”

“I must see the Abbé de Dillon this evening!” said Kate; “it is of the very greatest importance! Will you have the goodness to take him a note from me?”

And she scribbled a few lines on a blank leaf of her pocket-book, which she gave into the old woman's hand. It was to this effect :—

“One, to whom the Abbé de Dillon promised advice and assistance when needed, claims the fulfilment of his promise. She is now an orphan—very helpless and very miserable.”

“K. D.”

The old woman took the note, and presently returned, with the reply, that the Abbé would be with the lady presently. The room into which Kate was shown was singular, and unlike what she had ever seen before. The walls were high, and panelled with dark Spanish wood; they were hung with old pictures, some of them evidently very fine. They were principally portraits of ecclesiastics—several of them were bishops—and one or

two had on cardinal's robes—at least, Kate supposed so, from the crimson vestments. An exquisite antique crucifix stood upon a small table, under a picture of the Annunciation ; the expression on the dead Saviour's face was so touching, that Kate could not help allowing to herself it was no wonder Catholics valued art so much as an auxiliary to their devotion. Beside the table, was a massive, old-fashioned arm-chair, and on the floor, in front of the crucifix, there was a dark velvet cushion, which had once been beautifully embroidered. Kate surveyed the whole chamber with interest ; it looked romantic, to say the least of it. Indeed, everything, however trivial, which is Roman Catholic, does so to a young Protestant seeing it for the first time. One thing struck her as incongruous, there was no carpet on the floor, which was of stone, and sanded. However, that did not take away from the picturesque appearance.

She now gave way to reverie, till at last

she almost fancied the grim portraits descended from the walls, and assumed life and vitality. But she found that this made her nervous, and had she indulged long in such day-dreams, they would have unfitted her for the task, which she had taken in hand to perform. She now amused herself examining the crucifix ; it was coloured like reality, and almost too life-like—for it was harrowing to the feelings—it brought so vividly before one the sufferings of our crucified Redeemer. But it had the effect, which the great artist had intended, by whose hands it was wrought. It made Kate forget her own troubles—forget where she was, and what she had come for—it transported her back a lapse of many centuries, and placed her in what seemed almost the actual presence of the “man of sorrows,” who had died for her !

“What are my trials compared to His !” she exclaimed ; “I ought to be ashamed of giving way as I have done ! Let me cast

my care upon God, and He will support me!"

"Yes, my daughter," responded the Abbé de Dillon, who now entered, "you will always find our good God a sure and ready help in trouble! He only asks for confidence on your part! Fly to him, as a child would to a father—and, touched by your filial trust in Him, He will in no ways cast you out!"

Kate hastily rose up, and brushed aside the tears from her eyes, ashamed of having been caught exhibiting so much emotion—and before a crucifix too. She curtsied, and began some apology to the Abbé for trespassing upon his valuable time, but the good priest cut her short, by saying—

"You need make no apology, Mademoiselle, you are in distress; you think I can assist you, and that is enough. But I beg your pardon; it seems to me I have heard this voice before,—aye, and seen this face, too,—if I mistake not. Can it be that you are a

Devereux? Are you not Miss Kate Devereux, the sister of my little friend Annie?"

"Yes, sir, I am Kate Devereux, and I have never forgotten your kindness to me, when you came to take Annie away. Your words, on that occasion, have often since recurred to me; and now that I am in distress, and in perplexity, not knowing where to turn, or whose advice to ask, I have bethought me of you. Was I wrong to come to you?"

"No, my child, no!" said the good Abbé, taking her hand, and leading her to a chair; "now sit down, and tell me the whole story. You may begin your history from the time I took away Annie."

The Abbé, after taking a pinch of snuff, looked at his watch, and observed,—

"I shall give you a whole hour, during which no one shall interrupt you, and my penitents may wait."

Kate did not tell her *whole* story to the Abbé, as he desired; it would have been

happy for her if she had done so, and perhaps spared herself, and others also, in whom she was deeply interested, much sorrow and annoyance. Fancying that he was now pressed for time, she confined her recital to the description of what had occurred while under Mrs. Marjory's roof, and only related those circumstances, which concerned her benefactress and herself. Thus, as she felt that she had no advice to ask on the subject of Devereux, a gulf of time and distance being now between them, she never mentioned his name. Nor did she speak of John Baron, because having made up her mind not to accept him as a lover, it would only have been wasting time to allude to him. She told the Abbé her adventure with the robbers,—their transportation,—her having seen in the newspapers that they had returned to England,—her remembering their threats of vengeance; Mrs. Castlemaine's and her own late tour on the continent, to avoid them;

the illness of the former ; their falling in with Mrs. Dees, and the extraordinary influence, which the latter had already acquired over the mind of Mrs. Marjory.

“ But, my dear young lady,” said the Abbé, when she had nearly finished, “ excuse me if I confess that I do not quite understand the circumstances. How are you so lonely and unprotected ? Has Mrs. Castlemaine no friends ? Have you no intimates ? Who are to welcome you back to England ? How are you here alone with the sick old lady ? ”

“ Now and then we have had our house full of company, and we have visited about occasionally,” replied Kate ; “ but I cannot say that during all the years I have known Mrs. Castlemaine we have been intimate with any one. I have literally no one to whom I can apply. We have had many gay acquaintances, but no friends.”

“ It is singular ! very singular ! And how do you account for this most complete isola-

tion? I thought that Mrs. Castlemaine was an agreeable woman, at least you have described her as such,—one every way qualified to form friends."

"She is, indeed, most agreeable and pleasing," replied Kate; "but she is fanciful and eccentric; she pleases every one, and yet never forms intimacies, except on rare occasions. She has often complained of the extreme solitude and loneliness of her life before she knew me; and yet it could not be called dull, for she kept up a round of visiting."

"Which pleased the fancy, but never warmed the heart, I suppose!" rejoined the Abbé; "well, my dear," he continued, "one thing is evident, you do not like Mrs. Dees, and yet can scarcely give a good reason for it. To own the truth, though in general I heartily disapprove of all fanciful and groundless dislikes, yet, in the present case, I myself do not like your description of the woman. I recommend you to be on your guard, and have

your wits about you. Never lose your temper, when annoyed with anything she does or says; for that gives her an advantage. Be as much with Mrs. Castlemaine as possible, without betraying any dislike to Mrs. Dees' assisting you in taking care of her, as that is her place. When Mrs. Marjory asks, to-morrow, why the physician does not call, repeat, as concisely as possible, and without remark, all he said to you this forenoon. Be assured, Mrs. Marjory will weigh it in her own mind, and though she may not take notice of it at the time, it will ultimately do good. Meanwhile, Miss Devereux, I myself shall not be idle in your behalf. Madame di Valdigamas is now, I am happy to say, in London; I shall call upon her, and get every information, regarding this person from her Excellency, who, of course, must know her very well, if she was so many years in her house. I shall be glad if you will call upon me next Tuesday, at the the same hour, when perhaps I shall be able

to tell you something. I shall probably introduce you then to the Ambassadress herself, as she generally pays me a visit, once a week, on that day. Now, my dear young lady, is there anything else I can do for you, meanwhile?"

Kate replied in the negative, and thanking the Abbé, rose to depart, when suddenly she stopped short.

"There is one thing, sir," she said, "that I wish to know. What has become of Annie? Why does she not write to me? Is she still in Paris?"

The Abbé smiled. "I am not at liberty to answer all these questions," he said. "Your sister has left school, having been taken away by her singular relative from India. I saw them only a few days ago, when she was well and happy. It is a whim of her uncle's to keep her apart from her relations, and to introduce her to the world, as his daughter.

However, when I see them again, which I hope to do before many days elapse, I shall tell the old gentleman about you, and request him to allow me to bring the two sisters together."

"It is monstrous and unnatural that he should separate us!" said Kate; "do tell me, is she in London? I must, I will, see her!"

"She is not in London, I assure you, my dear Miss Devereux, otherwise, I promise you, we should both have been on our way to see Annie by this time!" said the Abbé; "but if all go well, and old Mr. Baron come to London, you shall meet in a few days."

"Next Tuesday?" asked Kate, her eyes glistening with pleasure.

"I cannot promise!" said the Abbé; "but now, my dear young lady, I must send you away. More than a dozen people are now waiting for me, as it is confession night.

Adieu, may God bless you! If you are in any difficulty, write to me without hesitation. I promise to send an answer, or come myself at your summons, if it be in my power."

CHAPTER IV.

"I am not an impostor, that proclaim
Myself against the level of mine aim ;
But know I think, and think I know most sure,
My art is not past power, nor you past cure."

All's Well that Ends Well.

KATE DEVEREUX, for, since the affair of the house-breakers, Mrs. Marjory had insisted upon her resuming her real name, returned home a great deal happier and more serene, from the mere fact of having been able to open her mind. She felt there was some one now, besides Mrs. Marjory, who really took an

interest in her, to whom she could relate the progress of events, and who, in the meantime, was exerting himself for her welfare. In short, she had found a friend, or at least she was sanguine enough to fancy so! It was strange too, in what a different light the same circumstances seemed on her return, to what they had done when she had left the house. Mrs. Dees still appeared disagreeable, but she was no longer seen through such an exaggerated medium, and consequently fell many degrees in the scale of importance, and apparent ability to do mischief!

“After I have had a chat with Mrs. Marjory, and when I have told her all the doctor has been saying, I dare say she will get a new light,” thought Kate; “then I can with a good grace propose a new nurse,—or what would be better still, send for Mrs. Burnet!”

While Kate was thus meditating and waiting in her own apartment, till the door of the

sick room should be opened, Mrs. Marjory awoke from a deep slumber.

“Where am I? she exclaimed; “Mrs. Dees, are you here? Oh, I am so much better,—I have such a renewed sensation of health and vigour running through my limbs!—Such a vivid feeling of being well!—What can you have been doing to me, Mrs. Dees?—What is your secret?”

“No secret at all, my dear lady,” she replied, “except that I have been doing all in my power to let nature work instead of counteracting her.”

“Well, there is not the least doubt,” said Mrs. Marjory, “that you understand me a great deal better than the doctor does. I did not take his medicine yesterday, and had he called to-day, I meant to have civilly dismissed him.”

The countenance of Mrs. Dees gleamed with pleasure, but she turned away to hide a smile, as the old lady spoke.

“ Now, dear Mrs. Dees,” she continued, “ pray turn towards me, and tell me all about it. What is it you do to me? How is it that I feel so satisfied and so comfortable, when you are near, and so dissatisfied and restless, when you are gone? I like to look at your eyes, and watch their expression; when you appear cheerful, I feel so; when a cloud passes over your expression, I cannot describe the pain it gives me. There is something scarcely natural in this,—I must beg you will explain how and why it is so.”

Mrs. Dees smiled as she sat down beside Mrs. Marjory, and took her hand:—

“ I was always reckoned a most excellent nurse,” she replied; “ in fact, it is my vocation, and they say that every individual has a peculiar vocation, to which Providence has called him, and that he is never happy till he find it out. You must know my vocation is tending the sick and trying to cure them, for I am a bit of a doctor, as well as a nurse.”

“ Now you are putting me off with a general description,” said Mrs. Marjory, “ and I do not mean to be thus put off. I wish to know exactly what you did to me this afternoon, and what produced my strange symptoms ?”

“ What were they, may I ask ?” rejoined Mrs. Does.

“ You ought to know, at least as well as I !” replied Mrs. Marjory, scanning narrowly the face of her attendant ; “ however, since you ask, I shall describe them. Miss Devereux had no sooner left me, and you locked the door, than I became conscious of a delicious odour pervading the apartment. I was just going to ask what it was, when it seemed to me that the walls of the room, and everything it contained, went round and round ; I felt a soft breeze fanning my cheek, and heard a low musical sound, something between the rustling of leaves and the tinkling of very distant silver bells. All this time I knew you were

beside me, though what you were doing I could not make out. Notwithstanding my ignorance, I was not uneasy, for I think never in my life did I feel a more perfect sense of happiness and well being. And now you must tell me everything,—I insist upon having an explanation.”

“ I have nothing to tell, my dear lady,” said Mrs. Dees, “ beyond this, that I always assist nature, and go along with her. I have studied her deeply, and know how to avoid counteracting her.”

“ Yes,” said Mrs. Marjory, “ we can take all that for granted,—you have told me as much before,—but what I now want to know is, what did you do to me this afternoon? And can you do it to me again, for it was pleasure, positive happiness. Did you magnetize me? ”

Mrs. Dees laughed, as she replied,—“ I cannot say I did, and yet I cannot altogether deny it. I gave you a soothing drink com-

posed of perfectly innocent ingredients, and at the same time I lulled you asleep, while waving my hands with a simple magnetic motion. A child might have drunk the potion with impunity, and a child might have waved his hands before you and magnetized you, as ably as I did. Believe me, there was no witchery in it."

"But I felt so happy, Mrs. Dees! So perfectly happy and blessed! You shall be my doctor in future, or I will have none. But tell me, where did you learn your art?"

"There is little art in the case," said Mrs. Dees. "While I lived in Portugal with Madame de Valdigamas, and afterwards, while we were travelling, I learned a great deal from a physician, who was in attendance. He was a man of wonderful ability, a true citizen of the world, one who had lived long in the East, and learned strange secrets from various oriental nations. He knew many curious things with regard to the properties of herbs;

secrets that would make the fortune of any one that would condescend vulgarly to promulgate them. He had besides studied magnetism. I do not mean in the lame, bungling manner in which it is generally practised in Europe ; but as it is known in Egypt, where much knowledge that is strange to civilized ears yet lingers."

"Mrs. Dees, you are a singular woman!" exclaimed Mrs. Marjory, suddenly interrupting her, and gazing half amused, half interested on her excited countenance and sparkling eyes ; "You are exactly the person I have been wishing to find ! You talk as if you believed in yourself, and had faith in what you said!"

"I should think so!" replied the woman, drawing herself up, and darting a proud flash of those unearthly bright eyes upon Mrs. Marjory, which would have made most women flinch.

"Well," rejoined the old lady, "I am convinced that you are something very much out

of the common,—a most excellent nurse, and a very clever woman. You have done me good, and, at least, amused and interested me, in no ordinary degree. I want now to know this doctor, who and what is he?—Does he reside in this country? For if so, I should like to talk to him about my complaints, since I am convinced that Dr. Aberfeldy does not understand me."

Mrs. Dees did not at first answer her, but she drew a long breath, as if she were repressing some overpowering feeling,—at last she replied,—

" His name is Dr. Salomé. I have not seen him for years, but I am acquainted with some one in London, who is likely to know his address, and tell me where he is to be heard of."

" Then find out for me this very evening all about him, I beg of you!" said Mrs. Marjory; " I am quite determined to see him, if a meeting with him be practicable."

Mrs. Dees accordingly put on her bonnet

and shawl, and went out ; going first to Kate, however, to let her know that Mrs. Marjory required her company.

Kate felt quite awkward, and looked so when she went in to sit with Mrs. Marjory. She tried to be the same in her manner as usual, but it was almost impossible. She was thinking that her old friend had now a mystery which she guarded, from her, while she herself felt almost guilty, because she had that afternoon gone on a secret expedition.

“ Kate, my love,” said the old lady, as she came in, “ what can be the matter with you ? You are looking so pale and unlike yourself. Is there any thing wrong ? Have you heard any bad news to-day ? ”

“ Yes, mamma,” replied Kate ; “ there is something wrong, though I hope that it may not prove of any great consequence ; I have heard something to annoy me to-day. The doctor, mamma,—Dr. Aberfeldy —— ”

“ Has been here, I dare say, croaking about

me!" interrupted the lively old lady; "don't pay the slightest attention to him, Kate, I beg of you. I have no doubt he is a block-head, and does not understand me in the least."

"He did not appear to think badly of your complaints at all, mamma," continued Kate; "so pray do not misjudge him. He complained to me of the way in which he has been treated, and says that his medicines have not been taken, other drugs of a very strong nature having been given instead."

"The man is mad!" exclaimed Mrs. Marjory; "until yesterday I took his medicines regularly."

"But may they not have been changed, mamma?" asked Kate; "the doctor seemed perfectly convinced of the fact, that you had not taken what he sent you."

"The doctor is an ass, with due respect be it spoken!" exclaimed the old lady, getting quite irritated; "who on earth would change

his medicine ? What object could be gained by doing so ? Do you think I would pay for his advice, and act contrary to it ? Or do you believe Mrs. Dees is the culprit ?”

“I am not giving my own opinion, mamma,” replied Kate ; “I am simply stating what the doctor said. I do not suppose he blamed you in the matter, but he evidently thought you had got into bad hands, and that the sooner you get a new nurse the better.”

“I am very sorry you have taken the trouble to repeat his insolence, Kate,” said the old lady ; “give me my desk, instantly, that I may inclose a check for what I owe him, and pay him off at once. Have the goodness to ring the bell, and desire the servant not to admit him again, should he call.”

Kate obeyed, and took out her work, while Mrs. Marjory wrote the note. She vainly attempted to make the stitches ; for her tears fell so fast, they nearly blinded her ; but she soon managed to calm herself, for she knew,

that above all things, the old lady disliked a scene. When the latter had finished, she held out her hand to Kate.

“Come to me, my child, and kiss me,” she said ; “you must have patience with me, and believe, that though I am annoyed at that old fool putting such nonsense into your head, I am not in the least displeased with you. You are still, and have always been, my dear Kate—my own dear Kate! And now, my child, if you feel composed enough, I shall thank you to read aloud for me this letter, which arrived just before you entered the room ; though what you told me of the doctor nearly put it, and everything else, out of my head.”

Kate took the letter and opened it. It proved to be from Mrs. Burnet ; and was written in great delight, at the prospect of soon seeing the ladies again. After giving every detail, with regard to domestic matters at Bird’s-nest, she mentioned that two foreign

letters, with the post mark "America," had arrived a few weeks before. They had evidently been mislaid at the post-office, for they looked old and faded. She asked if she was to forward them ?

"Write to her instantly, Kate, and tell her to do so ; how very silly and provoking in her to lose time by asking the question. Poor Devereux ! my heart told me that there was an excuse for him. But, my love, do go on—finish the letter before you begin writing."

It was just as well that Kate did so, for in the last page of Mrs. Burnet's long letter, she found information that soon made her forget all about the American letters.

"Who do you think, my honoured mistress," it went on to say, "paid me a visit about a fortnight ago ? Who, but Mr. Devereux Charteris. When I saw him, my heart went all pit-a-pat, for I thought directly upon Miss Kate, and how he seemed to worship her, like. I thought it right, however, the minute I saw

him, to put him out of pain. Indeed, I felt sure that you would have wished me to do so, had you been there, honoured madam."

Kate stopped short ; her breath came quickly, and she glanced rapidly down the page.

" What does the old fool mean ?" cried Mrs. Marjory ; " for heaven's sake do go on ! Don't keep me in suspense !"

But Kate's colour went and came, she trembled like a leaf, she tried to speak, but could not. Mrs. Marjory seized the letter, and read as follows,—

" I repeated to him all that Jemima had told me : the rise and the progress of Mr. Baron's courtship ; how he was so handsome and so rich ; and how Miss Kate had settled it all ; that she was not to come back to England till she had changed her name (for I did not know then, honoured madam, that you were on the road home) ; and how she had ordered all her wedding finery from Paris."

“The provoking simpleton!” exclaimed Mrs. Marjory; “She deserves to lose her place! What can be done now, Kate? What shall we do to undeceive him?”

But poor Kate did not stay to answer the question, she rushed to her own room, threw herself on the bed, and, covering her face with her hands, wept bitterly! Mrs. Marjory determined to write to Devereux directly, and address it to Charteris Hall, whence it would be sure to be forwarded; but the return of Mrs. Dees put it all out of her head, and for the next few days, she was too much occupied to have leisure again to think of it. It was late when the Abigail returned.

“I have heard of him!” whispered she, mysteriously as she entered; “He is not now in London, but he is to be found by those of his friends, who have influence sufficient to tempt him from his studies! A trusty messenger is gone to him,—he is sure to come at my call,—for he knows me well, and

remembers me! I think I may safely promise, that he will be with you to-morrow, by mid-day, at farthest!"

"I am delighted!" exclaimed Mrs. Marjory; "But where is he? What does he do? What is the nature of his occupations? Sit down, Mrs. Dees, and tell me all about him!"

"I do not exactly know where he is," she replied, "but I believe he is somewhere in Essex. He is generally engaged in his laboratory, which I hear he has fitted up, lately, at very great expense. No doubt he is in pursuit of some valuable secret to benefit mankind, for he never thinks of himself,—his objects are always unselfish!"

Mrs. Dees was quite surprised at not finding Kate with Mrs. Marjory, and tried in various indirect ways to find out if there was any cause of estrangement, but for once, the latter was impenetrable.

Mrs. Marjory counted the hours next day till Dr. Salomé arrived. He was punctual to

the time that Mrs. Dees had fixed, for, precisely as the clock struck twelve, he was announced. She had fancied in her own mind, that she was about to see a little old man, bent with study, looking very un-world-like, perhaps with a Jewish physiognomy, and strange, antique dress,—in short, very much her *beau-ideal* of an aged necromancer! In these ideas she was completely at fault, for when Dr. Salomé entered, she beheld a young, handsome, fashionably dressed man. His countenance bespoke her favour at once,—it was, indeed, a magnificent face, and looked full of genius! All was satisfactory in his appearance, but for a peculiarly unsettled wandering of the eye, which Mrs. Marjory, indeed, did not remark, but which impressed Kate unfavourably, who chanced to be in the room, as he entered. She, of course, immediately retired, to let him question his patient without restraint. His manner was quiet and respectful, his questions concise and to the point,

there was nothing of clap-trap or bombast about him. In short, he presented a striking contrast to Mrs. Dees.

“ You have been much in the East, have you not ? ” said Mrs. Marjory.

“ I have travelled there, madam ! ” he replied ; “ Eight years of my life have been passed in Asia and Africa ! ”

“ Mrs. Dees has informed me, that you are in possession of some traditionary secrets, which might enrich you, were you to make them known ! Is it so ? ”

“ Mrs. Dees’ imagination outstrips her prudence occasionally ! ” replied he ; “ it is not likely that I would willingly remain poor, and in difficulties,—I mean comparatively poor, without the means of pursuing my expensive investigations on the scale I should wish,—were I in possession of secrets, that would turn me in the gold I required ! The thing is an absurdity ! ”

When at last the conversation turned upon

Mrs. Marjory's complaints, Dr. Salomé gave such a clear description of them, that she was quite delighted. Instead of requiring to ask questions, he seemed to have an intuitive knowledge of every symptom, and his ideas as to the origin and cause of the disease, exactly coincided with those of the lady herself; which, indeed, was not to be wondered at, for he had been tutored by Mrs. Dees, when she had seen him the day before! His opinions, being completely at variance with those of Dr. Aberfeldy, made the latter appear to great disadvantage.

“ The seat of your disease, madam, is the spinal chord, and the nerves are consequently much affected!” said the doctor; “ Mrs. Dees was right, when she spoke of a gentle magnetic treatment being required; this, with judicious frictions and the use of the metallic tractors, will, I hope, complete your cure. I am sorry it will not be in my power to superintend the treatment, I am so much engaged

at present in very important investigations, which I have now nearly brought to a close, after a considerable expenditure of time and money. Were I to attend you here, I should have to give them up, and thus render my past labours fruitless."

Mrs. Marjory looked exceedingly disappointed, and, after considering a few moments, said,—

" If you would excuse the freedom of my inquiries, and explain to me frankly what is the nature of these investigations, it might, perhaps, be in my power to offer you, what would adequately remunerate any loss, you might sustain by me."

Dr. Salomé hesitated, looked embarrassed, and, after a moment's pause, replied,—

" Well, I will repose confidence in you, madam, and rely upon your honour not to reveal my occupation, which I am now desirous of concealing, lest it raise around me a host of competitors, eager to win the prize

that I hope to retain. I have been for the last twelve months occupied in making experiments on the nature, and properties of the plant *Hashish*. You may probably have heard of it before, madam, but you can scarcely be aware, to what extent those scientific men of old, who went by the name of "sorcerers and necromancers" were indebted to it. The vivid phantasmagoria which it excites, in many cases impossible to be distinguished from reality, are truly marvellous! Hitherto, its effects upon different individuals have been so varied, so uncertain, often so unexpected, that it has been talked of by medical men, rather than used, being regarded as an agent of awe and mystery. My object has been to discover, what are its laws of action; if possible, to acquire a certainty, with regard to its effects under peculiar combinations; in short, to render it an obedient agent, subservient to the welfare of humanity. My ambition is vast,—my object is great,—I believe I stand on the

brink of great secrets. I believe this mysterious plant, this gift of God, was referred to in some ancient manuscripts, which I possess, that treat of the connection between matter and spirit, and the means of gaining glimpses into the spiritual world. I believe too, nay, I know, that it formed the principal ingredient in that most precious gift, ever bestowed by the healing art upon man, the method of making which is now lost, since it perished with the ancient alchymists,—I mean ‘The Elixir of Life’!”

Mrs. Marjory was excited, delighted, surprised;—a young and handsome man, full of fire and evident genius, had made her his confidante. He was now on the brink of discovering important secrets. She could perhaps further his object, while, at the same time, she secured the benefit of his valuable assistance. She would retain him,—get him to stay in her house,—be her family physician,—and pursue his investigations under her roof.

After a long and interesting conversation, this plan was proposed. Dr. Salomé appeared pleased, gratified, nay, almost touched, by the generosity shown in the terms, in which the offer was couched. He demanded time to consider the proposal, promised to return in the evening, and hastily retired. Mrs. Marjory sent immediately for Kate and Mrs. Dees, and told them of her plan, as far as she could, without betraying the doctor's confidence. Kate's heart sank within her as she listened but she did not say a word, while Mrs. Dees openly expressed her gratification, though she seemed to think it very doubtful if Salomé would consent. On the other hand, Kate had not the slightest doubt about his acceptance of Mrs. Marjory's handsome offer. The reverse would have been too good to be true.

In the evening Dr. Salomé returned. Mrs. Dees managed to see him alone for a moment before he entered, and whispered,—

“ You have arranged capitally ; but, for my

sake, get us all out of London as fast as possible. I heard from the servants that Miss Devereux was out for two hours yesterday. I immediately found out the hackney coachman who drove her, and gathered from him that she has been visiting the Abbé de Dillon, the confessor of Madame de Valdigamas. There is mischief brewing, be assured!"

" You are right," responded Dr. Salomé ; " we had better not stay. Shall I recommend B—— ? It is a pleasant watering-place, and there will be no one there to disturb us, I should think."

Mrs. Dees nodded her head, and making a gesture of caution, ushered him into the sick room. All was soon arranged, according to the wishes of the accomplices, and Kate was only sent for, about half an hour afterwards, to be informed that the whole party were to start for B——, the next day, at twelve o'clock.

We shall now return to the Abbé de Dillon, who, about this time, set out to find his old friend, the Ambassadress, to procure all the information he could from her, for Kate's benefit. Madame di Valdigamas was little, dark, elegant, and *spirituelle*; she rose from her seat as he entered, and hastened to welcome him, while, in a lively tone, she asked to what fortunate circumstance she was indebted for the pleasure of his visit, on a different day than usual?"

"But, I dare say," continued she, laughing, "that you are come to beg! I know, by experience, that when I see you out of your appointed time, you are pretty sure to be meditating an attack upon my unfortunate purse! Now own the truth! Is it not for some member of your poor, distressed, starving London mission, that you are come to request my aid? I am only too glad to help you—so tell me all!"

"You are partly right, and partly wrong,

madam!" replied the Abbé; "I am come in the cause of charity, as I wish to enlist your sympathy, on the part of an interesting girl, who seems to me to be very friendless! But I am not come to beg! She is rich enough—or at least—is now living with a rich person."

"She may be very poor, and very friendless," said the Marchioness, "and yet be living in the house with rich people—I don't see that mends the matter! If it is in my power, however, I shall be glad to befriend her, but you must not expect me to take the same interest in her, that I have done in your last *protégée*, who is, without exception, the most interesting and beautiful creature I ever in my life beheld!"

"The circumstances of the two are very different, and yet something alike!" replied the Abbé; "both are under the guardianship of eccentric people, and neither possesses a female friend, on whom to rely for advice. There, ceases the resemblance in their circumstances;

for the one is flushed with prosperity, and the other seems to me, threatened by some danger which I cannot exactly make out ; it is a mystery which, I must crave the assistance of your clear head, to unravel. In order to bespeak your sympathy, I must, before narrating my story, acquaint you with the fact, that my two heroines are sisters !”

“ What !” exclaimed the Marchioness, in surprise ; “ is the girl you are now speaking of, the sister of Annie Baron ? How is that possible ? The old nabob told me, himself, that he had no other child !”

“ She is Annie’s sister, nevertheless !” said the Abbé ; “ And now that I have wound up your curiosity to its highest pitch, if you will sit down calmly, and listen to my long story, and if you will promise not to interrupt me by asking too many questions, I will begin.”

The Marchioness laughed, and obeyed, while the Abbé, taking a seat beside her, commenced :—

“I must confess, that I cannot exactly comprehend the reason, which prompts Mr. Baron to call his beautiful niece his daughter, and to forbid any communication on her part with her relatives; unless it be his innate love of power, and his fixed determination, that he alone shall influence her. Annie’s real name is Devereux; she belongs to a very old and distinguished family, with whom she, her brothers and sisters, have hitherto had but little connection, as their parents gave offence by forming an imprudent marriage. Kate Devereux, in whose behalf I have come to you to-day, is considerably older than Annie, and has been living, for the last half-a-dozen years, with an eccentric old lady, who has introduced her into society, and adopted her. She has hitherto got on well with her protectress, whom she loves as a mother, and who is also deeply attached to her. But latterly Mrs. Castlemaine has fallen into a bad state of health, that has insensibly changed

her character, and, perhaps, weakened somewhat her powers of mind. At any rate, she has fallen under the influence of a strange sort of person, a female adventuress, I have no doubt, whom they picked up abroad. She has induced the old lady to act contrary to the advice of her regular medical adviser, and to put herself under her care. In short, Kate fancies that she is tampering with Mrs. Castlemaine's health, and trying to acquire an undue influence over her, for purposes of her own. As this is only Kate's suspicion, and is not yet proved, she is anxious to find out something with regard to the woman's previous character, which may better enable her to judge—and it is for this purpose I am now come to your Excellency. You are supposed to know about this Mrs. Dees!"

"Mrs. Dees!" exclaimed the Ambassadress; "I never heard the name before in my life! I am the very last person likely to know! What makes you think of asking me?"

“ The woman says that she was in your service many years, and besides shows an excellent character from you, in your own handwriting. It is impossible that you could have forgotten her in appearance, she is so striking and singular. Her eyes, alone, are enough to frighten a nervous person, Kate says.”

“ Her eyes, do you say ?” interrupted the Ambassadress ; “ had you called her a Spaniard, instead of an English woman, I should have directly exclaimed, ‘ It can be no one but Mariana Diaz !’ But then the character must be forged !”

“ Ah ‘ Mariana Diaz !’ That is the person !” cried the Abbé ; “ the very name Kate mentioned having seen on one of her books ! It is the same ; do let me hear all about her ! Who and what is she ?”

“ That horrid woman !” exclaimed the Marchioness, looking aghast ; “ the very sound of her name makes me shudder ! I had hoped to have heard of her no more, and to have

done with her for ever. I pity any one indeed, who comes under her influence."

"I am sorry to hear that you have such an opinion of her," said the Abbé, "but I sincerely hope now, that you will aid me to unmask her."

"I shall tell you all I know about her willingly!" said her Excellency; "would to heaven she had never come across my path! It is a matter of astonishment to me now, that she mentioned my name, or referred to me at all."

"Depend upon it, she would not have mentioned you had she known that you were in this country!" replied the Abbé; "but you have arrived here so unexpectedly, that she is taken off her guard."

"Ah, true, true!" said the lady; "she would nearly as soon think of cutting off her right hand, as of naming me, did she know I was in London. Well, to proceed with my story:—The Marquis had a rencontre with

smugglers on the frontiers of Spain and Portugal, it may be seventeen years ago. I call them smugglers, but they were half smugglers, half banditti. They carried him off, under pretence of preventing him betraying them, and then detained him for ransom. He there for the first time saw this woman, Mariana Diaz ; she had a few days before lost her husband, who was a gipsy, and had perished in a conflict with the custom-house officers."

"A most reputable commencement of her acquaintance with your family!" remarked the Abbé ; "and pray, what did Mariana do? Did she help the Marquis to escape, and thus lay a claim on your gratitude?"

"Not exactly ;" replied the Marchioness, "though I believe she did serve him by procuring him many little comforts he would not otherwise have had. She took several opportunities of telling him, how disgusted she was with her mode of life, and how anxious she was to change and amend. So, some months

after the Marquis, having paid his ransom, had rejoined me, she made her appearance. She told such a moving story, and won upon our compassion so much, that at last I consented to receive her into my establishment, until I could find her a suitable situation. My own maid meanwhile took ill ; she asked permission to supply her place ; I accepted her, and she took advantage of being near my person, to acquire a great influence over me,—an influence, for which even to this day I cannot account. It was like what the old English writers call ‘glamourie,’ for indeed I was bewitched by her. I was fascinated by the woman’s tongue, and insensibly learned to see every thing through her medium. But I should not have been so much led away by her, had she not enlisted my religious feelings also in her behalf. Being a gipsy like her late husband, she had no fixed belief when she came to me.”

“A gipsy!” exclaimed the Abbé ; “putting

that and that together, I think I now get a clue to the affair. Poor Kate! We shall be able to help you yet! But go on, madam,—pray go on,—I am all attention."

"Taking a great interest in the woman as I did," continued the Marchioness, "I was of course anxious about her religious state, as I saw that she never went to church, not even receiving the sacrament at Easter. I spoke to her frequently on the subject, and after a year had passed, succeeded, as I thought, in awaking her to a vivid consciousness of the dangerous state of her soul. Her penitence was most edifying, and her humility excessive. She spoke of herself as the greatest of sinners, and really appeared to believe it. In fact I have not the least doubt now that she was such, though, at that time, I attributed this mode of speaking to her great fervour."

"Hush! my daughter!" said the Abbé; "Confine yourself to a narration of the facts, and let us have no private judgments!"

“For a year or two,” continued the Marchioness, “she led a most exemplary life, and I was greatly delighted with my convert. Though she afterwards fell away so dreadfully, I can scarcely believe that she was at that time insincere. We all looked up to her and respected her ; she won favour not only with ourselves, but with the domestics, who went to Mariana, in every exigency, in quest of advice and assistance. About this time, my husband engaged a youth of seventeen, Salomé by name, to act as private secretary. We were all struck with his great resemblance to Mariana, but they did not appear to have any connection with each other. He was a lad of wonderful talent, and the Marquis soon took as great a fancy to him, as I had done to her. His knowledge was quite wonderful, considering that, as far as we could learn, he had not received a regular education. He was fond of abstruse sciences, knew something of antiquities, and was constantly poring over

old manuscripts. For a time he quite turned my husband's head, with his vagaries about discovering the sciences which had been known to the ancients, but were afterwards lost. The marquis and he had a close correspondence with Jewish Rabbis in Spain, Portugal, and elsewhere, and large sums were expended in purchasing rare Hebrew manuscripts, besides a vast deal squandered in erecting laboratories, and in expensive chemical experiments."

"Pray do not call it squandered, madam!" interrupted the Abbé. "When a rich man lays out money in the cause of science, I reckon it well spent, and that he is a benefactor to the human race!"

"It depends a good deal on what the science is!" replied the Marchioness; "At least I should think so. I took a great distaste to their pursuits, after opening a little work, that I found lying in Salomé's studio, which was written in old Portuguese, and treated of the art of raising spirits! The Marquis only

laughed, when I spoke to him about it! However, we all know that the Jewish Rabbis have gone very far in their pursuit of what they call the secrets of the Cabala. I had often heard they have a magical tendency, and I therefore grew very uneasy at my husband's extraordinary intimacy with Salomé, lest he should inveigle him into studies, condemned by the Church. My remonstrances were generally disregarded, and I got well laughed at for my pains! So at last I determined to think no more about it, and if there was any harm or danger, if possible, to shut my eyes, as it was evident I could do no good. About this time, Mariana petitioned for a post then vacant in my establishment, which would have given her the command over all the other servants, and placed a great deal in her power. Notwithstanding my high opinion of her, it was inconvenient for me to grant her request,—so I refused, and gave it to another. After this

disappointment, Mariana never appeared the same; she lost her cheerfulness, acquired a dogged look, and gave up in a great degree her religious duties. The woman to whom I had given the post began to look ill shortly afterwards, lost her strength and appetite, fell into low spirits, and gradually pined away, till she died in the following year. Again Mariana asked for the place, and again I refused; not because it was inconvenient to me then to give it, but because I had changed my opinion of her considerably, and though I had no very great fault to find with her, yet my esteem for her was certainly lessened. So I gave the post once more to another, and strange to say, the very same thing happened again. The second individual, holding the much coveted situation, after a few weeks, grew weak, pale, and spiritless; she complained of no positive ailment, and yet her vital powers seemed to fail. It was with difficulty I could persuade her to try

medical advice, for she persisted in saying it was of no use, and that she should die ! And she did die soon after, to the surprise of us all, at the very time that the doctor had said there was nothing the matter with her, but weakness, and that all she wanted was nourishing food ! My servants now became very much incensed, and did not scruple to whisper loudly ; so loud as even to reach my ears, that my two former female intendants had come to an untimely end, blighted by the evil eye, and that Mariana Diaz was the author of the mischief ! I now took the part of my *protégée*, whom I believed to be unjustly accused, and of course did all in my power to silence the slander of the other domestics. I even thought of now giving Mariana her long coveted situation, as the best proof in my power, of my entire conviction of her innocence. But the Marquis opposed it, on account of the general discontent it would occasion in the household. The Marquis's

opposition was the more singular, because, as I afterwards learned, Salomé had taken the liberty to add his influence, in favour of Mariana's pretensions! And so it was that a third time, while this woman was in my house, I gave the post of female intendant to another. A third time the intendant sickened, showing exactly the same symptoms as her predecessors. This time at least, I thought, it could not be accident,—there must be a cause, probably a physical one. So I had the intendant's rooms examined, to see if there was bad air in the neighbourhood, or if they were exposed to any obnoxious influence! Then I inquired into her manner of life, and examined what she ate, and what she wore! My investigation was fruitless, although I had a clever physician to assist me. The servants smiled, and shook their heads, as they observed the pains I took in vain, and repeated again,—

“‘ We told your Excellency long ago what

was the matter with the intendants, and we repeat it again ; they have been evil wished.'

"The poor woman herself refused to take any remedy, saying it was no case for the doctor to cure : it was rather for the priest. In the end, I sent for a holy Franciscan monk, Brother Joachimo, who, to great piety, added the merit of being a remarkably clever man. He saved the poor woman's life, and solved many mysterious things which had occurred in my establishment, and in the neighbourhood. It seems that Mariana Diaz was in partnership with Salomé, a thing of which I had no idea, but which some of the domestics had long suspected. They made a considerable profit by privately selling charms, love-philters, and pernicious medicine, to the young men and women of the neighbourhood ; nay, it was whispered that they had even given drugs, destructive to human life, of some of the old people, too ; but I cannot vouch for the truth of the latter accusation. At any rate, enough

came out to show that they were very dangerous persons, and likely to corrupt the morals of a whole neighbourhood. So they were both turned off in disgrace, to the great satisfaction and joy of all the right thinking part of my establishment, though, I believe, there were still a few *mauvais sujets*, silly enough to regret them. Indeed, I fear," added the Marchioness, laughing, "that I must almost include the Marquis, under the latter head, for though his eyes were opened at last to the disreputable practices of Salomé, he missed his fellow student for many a day afterwards."

"But you have not specified," said the Abbé, "the exact cause of the death of your intendants. What did brother Joachim think about it?"

"He had little doubt," said the Marchioness, "that Mariana had tampered with their health in one way or other--perhaps by acting on their imaginations. But now, *mon père*," continued she, "what can I do for Kate ? In

what way can I be useful to her? She seems already sufficiently aware of that horrid woman's true character."

"I wish you could warn the old lady against her!" said the Abbé, musing; "And yet I do not see very well how that is to be done, as you do not know her."

"It is a very delicate task, I assure you, to take upon one's self!" she replied; "strangers seldom get any thanks who warn mistresses against their servants. In fact, it is very rarely the duty of a third person to interfere."

"But in this case, my dear Marchioness," he rejoined, "it is perhaps a question of life and death; no one can tell the serious mischief that may be done by an unprincipled creature like Mariana."

"That is most true!" she replied; "so now if you will just tell me what you wish me to do, I shall be happy to obey you. I shall take upon myself the responsibility, and accept,

as a penance, any awkwardness I may feel in performing the task."

"I would have you, then," said the Abbé, "call upon Kate, and try to cheer her; be guided by her opinion, as to whether you should see Mrs. Castlemaine, and put her on her guard. At all events, you ought to ask to see Mrs. Dees, to make sure that she is the same person. If she be, and indeed I do not doubt it, take advantage of your knowledge of her past misdeeds, to frighten her. Tell her, if you like, that you will get your husband to state all he knows of her to the London police; that they will soon be on her track; and that unless she wishes to be brought to trial for her share in the death of your two intendants, she had better decamp at once and make her escape."

"Oh! my dear Abbé, how could I say such a thing! It is by no means certain that Mariana had anything to do with their death!"

And it is such a horrible accusation! Only think, if she should prove to be innocent after all, how could I ever forgive myself?"

"Well," said the Abbé, "if there is any doubt on the subject, you must of course be careful what you say. But I should think you know quite enough with regard to her mal-practices to be able to frighten her, by threatening to point her out to the police, as a person they should keep their eye upon."

"I shall do what I can," said the Marchioness; "but I shall consider a little before I make up my mind how to act. You are giving me, reverend father, a very difficult task to perform; it might shake stronger nerves than mine to face a violent woman, like Mariana, on such an errand. At any rate, I shall see Kate, your interesting *protégée*, and let you know, in a few days, the result. The very fact of my visiting Miss Devereux will

have a beneficial effect; Mariana will be sure to hear of it, and it will make her be on her guard."

The Abbé thanked the Marchioness and departed.

CHAPTER V.

“The maid is fair, o’ the youngest for a bride,
And I have bred her at my dearest cost,
In qualities of the best.”

Timon of Athens.

THE next day Kate rose very early, as they were to set out for B—— at twelve o’clock; she packed her clothes before breakfast, in order to have sufficient time after that meal to pay the Abbé a hurried visit, and let him know the change in her address. She would take advantage also of the opportunity to

make some purchases for Mrs. Marjory, which the old lady had desired her to do, and she went into her bed-room to tell her so. There she found Mrs. Dees, who appeared much annoyed on hearing that she was going out.

“I beg your pardon, Miss Devereux ;” she said, “but you do not appear to be aware of London customs. No young lady of your station would go out by herself to shop. You had better allow me to put on my bonnet and cloak and accompany you.”

“I am much obliged to you, Mrs. Dees,” said Kate, blushing as she said so ; “but I am not going to walk, as, I dare say you suppose. I have engaged a hackney-coach, so I shall not need you.”

“Indeed, my dear young lady,” said Mrs. Dees, “it will not do at all, for you to go alone, even in a hackney-coach. It does not look well, to say the best of it, for a young unmarried lady to be entering shops by herself. You had better let me go with you.”

“ And what am I to do, Mrs. Dees, in your absence ? ” asked Mrs. Marjory. “ Who is to assist me ? If Miss Devereux require any one to accompany her, she had better request the mistress of the house to let one of her daughters go.”

“ That I shall do willingly ! ” said Kate, eagerly availing herself of the proposal to get rid of Mrs. Dees, who could find nothing more to say.

A female of genteel appearance was soon found to accompany her, and Kate had no reason to be ashamed of her escort. When she reached the neighbourhood of the square, she requested her to remain in the coach, while she paid her visit to the Abbé. Kate was rather ashamed of going so soon again—two days at least before the time appointed ; but she thought her case was urgent, so she knocked boldly. The Abbé was not at home, he had been called out of town to see a sick person, early that morning, and was not expected

back till late. Kate turned as pale as a lily when she heard this, and leant against the doorway for support.

“ You had better come in, Miss ! ” said the old porteress, looking at her with interest, she appeared so utterly cast down; “ pray come in and rest yourself ! Perhaps you would like to write a few lines to the Abbé ! ”

Kate gladly availed herself of the old woman’s offer, and hastily wrote a note informing him of the new actor that had appeared on the scene, and of the sudden change in Mrs. Castlemaine’s plans.

“ You must think me a ‘ strange girl,’ ” concluded poor Kate ; “ thus to throw myself with such confidence on your compassion. But I believe you are a true minister of Christ, and that it is your delight as well as your duty to console the afflicted, whether belonging to your own creed, or that of another. If you know any one at B—— to whom you can give me an introduction, I shall feel exceedingly obliged.

It ought to be a prudent person, for I am sure I shall need all the aid that human prudence can give, to enable me to act with discretion, in my difficult circumstances ; and it should be a kind-hearted person to bear with my importunity, and to show me by encouragement that I may venture to unburden my heart.

The Abbé smiled, when on his return in the evening, he read Kate's description of the imaginary person to whom she wished a letter of introduction.

“ After all ! ” he exclaimed, as he sat down and hastily wrote the epistle required, “ were I to search the world over, I could not find a person who more exactly suits Kate's description than Madame de Beaurevoir ! What a fortunate thing she is at B—— ! But bless me ! The silly child has forgotten to leave her address ! Where can I send it ? ”

As Kate was perfectly unconscious of the omission, she made no effort to rectify it. So the Abbé, after waiting two or three weeks in

hopes of again hearing from Kate, at last determined to send the letter of introduction at once to Madame de Beaurevoir, and beg of her to try to find out Miss Devereux at B—.

Meanwhile Devereux became more and more fascinated with Annie. Lovely though she was however, he would probably have disregarded her beauty, had she not so strongly reminded him of Kate. He sometimes looked like a person in a dream, and quite unconscious of his own strange manner. In the midst of lively conversation he often stopped short, and fell into a reverie, with his eyes fixed upon Annie. She thought nothing of this at first, and sometimes playfully asked him what he was thinking about; then he would awake with a start, and apologise for his absence of mind. Annie would laugh gaily, and commence bantering him in such a lively and amusing way, that old Hoozoor Sydajee would forget his dignity, rub his hands with glee at

what he thought the success of his plans, and chuckle audibly. Annie took riding lessons also, and Devereux frequently rode out with her and her uncle. She had a beautiful voice too, which had been carefully cultivated, and it was a great pleasure to all when the young people sung duets together; at last it came to be an understood thing that there should be a musical practising every evening, when they were not otherwise engaged. Annie often came to see Madame de Beaurevoir, to whom she had been recommended by her friend, Adèle, and soon won her heart by her artless affection. Mrs. Charteris was no less delighted with her, and encouraged the intimacy by every means in her power, as she hoped thus to cure her son of all lingering regret for Kate. The two ladies often talked together of Annie, and though at first the Frenchwoman appeared annoyed at the idea of Devereux falling in love with her, yet she became quite reconciled to it, when Mrs. Charteris told her that

by this time Kate was probably married to another.

“Don’t you think,” said she one day to the old lady, “that Mr. Baron ought as soon as possible to get a *chaperone* for Annie? It appears to me far from ‘*comme il faut*,’ that Devereux should be so much with her, and no other female present, as must always be the case when he visits at their house.”

“You are right!” said Mrs. Charteris; “I begin already to take an interest in Annie, as if she were my daughter, so I shall try to give Mr. Baron a hint, next time I see him, of what I think propriety requires.”

Mr. Baron, being always delighted to talk of Annie, was very much gratified to perceive the evident interest taken in her by the old lady, so he instantly adopted her suggestion, and said he was quite annoyed that he had not thought of the plan before.

“But now, where can I get a person?” he inquired. “I must have a perfect gentlewoman,

of good family, agreeable manners, and a Roman Catholic. If I could meet with a second Madame de Beaurevoir," he added, bowing towards the Frenchwoman, "Annie would be fortunate indeed!"

Madame appeared gratified by the compliment, and said that had she been disengaged, it would have given her the greatest pleasure to be of use to Miss Baron, but she had no doubt that many could be found to fill the post as well or better than herself. She suggested the Abbé de Dillon, as an excellent person to consult.

"But I wish I could hear of some one to come to Annie immediately—this very day if possible!" said Mr. Baron; "I do not like the idea of her passing another twenty-four hours without a *chaperone*! I cannot imagine how I did not think of it before!"

"It is manifestly impossible," said Mrs. Charteris, "that you can get a first-rate person—one in every way desirable at such short notice!"

But since you are in such a hurry, I can recommend you a middle-aged gentlewoman of tolerably genteel manners, who can take care of Annie till you suit yourself more perfectly. Her name is Lucretia Mitten ; she is now living at B——, and she will, I am sure, be glad to be of use to you for a few weeks, till you meet with some one more suitable !”

“ Not Miss Mitten, for Heaven’s sake !” exclaimed Madame.

But Mrs. Charteris reproved her by a look, and added—“ It is of such great importance to our dear Annie, to have an elderly person residing with her immediately, that one must not be too particular. Miss Mitten will do very well for a week or two !”

All was soon arranged ; Miss Mitten was sent for—gladly accepted the proposal, and was comfortably installed in her new quarters by tea-time, to the great satisfaction of Mr. Baron. He began from the first to talk a great deal to her and pay her much attention,

in order to leave the young people more opportunity of getting acquainted. In short, no artful mother in May Fair ever more strongly set her heart upon bringing about a favourite match, than did Hoozoor Sydajee plot, plan, and contrive to make the young people fall in love with each other.

The next time Mr. Baron called on Mrs. Charteris he began talking of old family descents, a subject always agreeable to the lady, and which generally drew out all her eloquence.

“I should disinherit my little daughter,” said he, “were she to make a *mésalliance*! I must have good blood; but I do not care for riches, as she will have enough from me! I should like to meet with some younger son, sincerely attached to Annie, and not personally disagreeable to herself, who would consent to take our ancient name in addition to his own!”

“There are few younger brothers who could object to that!” said Mrs. Charteris, with a

gracious smile ; “ it is not as if they were about to enter a family of *parvenu* extraction ; but one of the oldest blood in England, for I am told the Barons of Baronscliffe settled in this country about the time of the Conquest.”

“ You are quite right, Madam !” rejoined Mr. Baron, looking as much pleased as his grim mouth would permit ; “ I should like very much some day to show you my genealogical tree !”

“ And I should have much pleasure in looking over it !” replied Mrs. Charteris ; “ I shall be glad to see it any day that is convenient for you. Our own genealogical tree is also very interesting ;” she continued, “ at least to those who are fond of those sort of studies. The old Charterises had their castles in Normandy, long before the Conquest. You are aware, I suppose, that Charteris was my family name ! My son’s father was a Devereux, of Devereux Hall ; he took my name on his marriage, being a younger son.”

A rapid gleam of satisfaction darted over the countenance of Hoozoor Sydajee, at this piece of information; but it instantly faded away, and gave place to a look of gratified attention.

“ My eldest son,” continued Mrs. Charteris, “ is already married, and I have no uneasiness now with regard to him; but I must confess that I am anxious about Devereux; I should like to see him settled. I do not feel so well and strong as I once used to do; my tenure of life can be but short, and it would be a great source of happiness to me to know, before I die, that he was united to an amiable partner.”

Mrs. Charteris paused, and kept her eyes fixed upon Hoozoor Sydajee, but his countenance was immovable; it was evident that he waited to hear a little more.

“ I told Devereux the other day,” she continued, “ that I meant to make over to him the Folkenham estates, which are worth, on an

average, three-thousand-a-year. This is, I think, as much as I ought to give him, considering he is a younger son."

"I consider you do very handsomely, Madam!" replied Mr. Baron; "for my part, I should not wish my son-in-law to possess more, were I to choose; and at the same time, I should not like him to have less, for people might otherwise say that he had sought my beautiful Annie from interested motives. However," added he, laughing, "when the destined suitor makes his appearance, I shall recognize him, for I have already fixed on my *beau idéal*."

And so saying Mr. Baron departed.

There were voices in the next room laughing gaily, so Mrs. Charteris rose and joined them. It proved to be only Madame and Annie, but Mrs. Charteris overheard the words—

"Now do tell me more about him! He must have been so amusing when a boy! I like hearing about him!"

But Annie stopped short suddenly, when she saw Mrs. Charteris, and the faintest blush overspread her cheeks.

“ Oh ! dear Mrs. Charteris, I am quite glad you are come. Madame gives me such lectures. She says I am not guarded enough ; that I do not understand propriety ; that I talk too much of the people I like ; and in short, that I am always committing blunders. Do take pity upon me, Mrs. Charteris, and let Madame de Beaurevoir live with me altogether. It is the only way to keep me out of scrapes.”

“ If I could only do without Madame’s kind attentions,” replied Mrs. Charteris, looking fondly at Annie, “ I should have the greatest pleasure in knowing she was with you. But you see I am so infirm and so feeble, that I could never do without her.”

“ Ah ! do ask uncle,—papa I mean,—do get another person in Miss Mitten’s place, for I do not like her !” continued the lively Annie ; “ Devereux and I cannot help being amused

with her, and I know it is very uncharitable to laugh at a person who means well."

"Miss Mitten is only come on a temporary arrangement!" said Mrs. Charteris; "I understand Mr. Baron is now looking out for another!"

"Oh, Mrs. Charteris!" exclaimed Annie, "I have heard so much of a dear, delightful, eccentric, mad creature, called Bettina Jones, who once lived with you, that I would give anything to get her. Don't tell Devereux that I named her, for, after keeping me laughing a whole forenoon with anecdotes of her, he told me she was the most unfit person I could possibly have. But young men cannot understand what young ladies require, so I took it into my head that she might do, and determined to ask you."

"She is very kind-hearted, and has a great deal of generous and honourable feeling, but she is as innocent of all common sense as the merest baby," replied Mrs. Charteris, "she is

the very last person I should recommend for you. It would be the blind leading the blind. Besides, she is now staying with a family in the north of England, and has not written to me for months. She seems to have forgotten that there is such a person in existence: I do think it is very ungrateful of her."

"It is her way," said Madame; "she does not consider it ingratitude. Though, while you are out of sight you are out of mind, yet, if you really required her services, no one, I am convinced, would be more generous and self-sacrificing in giving them. Besides, I really do not believe that poor Miss Jones knows where to address you; no one has written to her since we decided on coming here."

"She knows very well that letters, addressed to the Hall would be forwarded immediately to us!" said Mrs. Charteris, in a gruff voice.

"Oh! don't be vexed with her, dear Mrs. Charteris!" exclaimed Annie, in an appealing

tone; “ Devereux is so fond of her, she must be a nice creature! I am sure I should like her too!”

Mrs. Charteris could not help smiling at the *naïveté*, with which Annie avowed her partiality for what Devereux liked. The young lady soon after departed, and Mrs. Charteris fell into a reverie, during which she debated, whether it would not be advisable to sound Devereux, with regard to his feelings towards Annie. She was not one of those quiet, placid mothers who are content to watch the progress of a love-affair without taking apparent notice of it, but she had an inveterate love of meddling with the course of events, and trying to direct them; unfortunately for Devereux, he happened to enter the room while her thoughts were still busy in this direction.

“ Madame,” said she, “ I wish to speak to my son for a few minutes alone, have the kindness to ——”

But Madame was already gone ere she could finish the sentence.

“ Well, mother,” said Devereux, who looked as if he did not enjoy what might be coming, “ I hope what you have to say will not take very long, as I am in a great hurry. I promised to ride with Annie before dinner.”

“ Annie has just been here,” said his mother, “ besides it is about her I wish to speak.”

“ What about her ?” asked Devereux, looking out of the window, as if perfectly unconcerned ; “ Is she going to be married soon ?”

“ Not that I know of,” she replied ; “ nor does it seem to me that she is likely to be, as long as young men dangle after her who do not know their own mind.”

Devereux looked supremely annoyed, but made no answer.

“ I wish, my dear son,” continued his mother, “ that you would talk frankly to me about this ;—do you like Annie ? You seem to me to take much pleasure in her society.”

“ Mother,” replied Devereux, “ this subject is really most disagreeable to me. However, because you are my mother, and out of respect for that sacred relationship, I shall answer you frankly. I do like Annie very, very much,—more than I ever supposed that I could like any one again; but if you wish to know whether my sentiments towards her can be termed love, I altogether deny it,—I am not a person likely to love again.”

Devereux paused, and Mrs. Charteris also was silent a minute or two, during which she eyed her son intently, and he returned the gaze without flinching; at last she said, —

“ If you are not in love with Annie, you are very wrong, my son, to pay so much attention to a young artless thing, such as she is, who is losing her heart to you as fast as possible. Even her father seems building on the certainty, that you are to be his son-in-law, at least such is my conviction.”

“ I am sorry to hear all this, Mother ! ” said

Devereux, taking up his hat and preparing to leave the room.

“ No, no, my son !” she exclaimed ; “ I cannot let you hurry away ; you must stay with me a little, and let me finish this subject.”

“ It is a disagreeable one, Mother ; let me go.”

“ No, Devereux,” she rejoined ; “ I insist upon you sitting down again. I wish to ask you one question. But first let me say to you, that since Kate Devereux is either married, or about to be so, pride, prudence, honour,—in short, every proper feeling, should prompt you to get rid of all lingering attachment to her as fast as possible. Do you not think so ?”

“ I do think so, Mother ;” replied Devereux, “ and I struggle to attain this object with all the powers of my soul. But what is your question ? Do be brief, Mother, for you torture me.”

“ My question is : When you succeed in forgetting Kate, could not Annie make you happy ? ”

“ You say well, Mother,—‘ When I succeed in forgetting Kate ! ’ ” replied Devereux, bitterly. “ When that time comes,—that happy time,—I shall think of Annie ; that I promise you,—if she then give me any encouragement.” And so saying, he hurried out of the room.

“ Well, this is already something gained ! ” said Mrs. Charteris to herself ; “ I only wish I could hear of that girl’s marriage. It is to be hoped nothing will break it off.”

That afternoon, Devereux was very quiet and grave during his whole ride, so much so, that Annie was almost offended, and several times cantered forward to join Miss Mitten and Mr. Baron. The latter had mounted that respectable spinster on horseback, that she might never be absent from Annie, and yet he took excellent care that she should be no

restraint upon her, as he always engrossed her himself.

“ Why do you leave Mr. Charteris, child ? ” he said, at last ; “ it is quite absurd that you should join us old people, when you have a gay cavalier to yourself.”

“ He is very stupid to-day, and I don’t like him at all, Papa ; ” said Annie, “ besides, Miss Mitten is not old,—you are very forgetful to call her so,—she is young enough to be your daughter.”

“ I was two-and-thirty last autumn ! ” said Miss Mitten, with a sigh ; “ Approaching the sere and yellow leaf ! When one comes to that time of life, Mr. Baron, one is forcibly reminded of the words of the Psalmist, ‘ the days of man are as grass ! ’ ”

“ Humbug ! ” growled Hoozoor Sydajee. “ Go back to Mr. Charteris, Annie.”

Annie obeyed, and found Devereux still in the brown study, in which she had

left him, when she went to speak to her uncle.

“ Well, Devereux, you are the most provoking creature to-day! Have I done anything to annoy you ?” she asked.

“ Why, Miss Baron, do you ask such a question ? You never gave me annoyance in your life.”

“ I am glad to hear it, Devereux,” she replied ; “ for really, to-day, I could almost believe that you disliked me ! you have spoken so coldly to me,—almost unkindly ; and repeatedly, when I have asked you a question, you have seemed not to hear me.”

Devereux looked curiously at Annie, she said this in such a grieved and pained tone of voice, that it struck him for the moment, perhaps his mother might have been right in what she hinted ; but he repelled the suggestion again, as ungenerous to Annie, and unworthy of himself, while she fixed her clear, bright, honest eyes upon him, so confidently

and innocently, that involuntarily he felt a flush pass over his face, because he had entertained such a suspicion.

“ You are looking very strange, Devereux, to-day ;” said Annie, “ just as if a great many thoughts were passing through your mind, which I was not to know. You have no right to let me read your thoughts partly, and then refuse to tell me more ! Either keep your ideas and feelings entirely concealed, or else let me know frankly what is the matter with you.”

“ Well, Miss Baron, I must say that you are the most extraordinary girl I ever met !” exclaimed Devereux, whose countenance was certainly looking very odd. “ What can you mean by saying that ‘ I have let you read my thoughts partly and yet refuse to tell you more ? ’ Which of my thoughts have you read ? If I find that you really are a sybil, I promise to be frank with you.—I mean as

frank as generosity and honourable feeling can require."

"Then I am to understand," said Annie, "that if I chance to describe your thoughts pretty correctly, you will reward me by satisfying my curiosity, and enlightening me about yourself, O most mysterious man!"

Devereux bowed, and Annie proceeded—

"Madame de Beaurevoir was saying to me only this morning, that I tell all that passes through my mind a great deal too freely,—that it is not maidenly to be so very frank,—that I am so sadly deficient in knowledge of the world, and that I am constantly doing or saying what I ought not. So, on second thoughts, I think I had better leave you alone,—I might go too far."

But by this time Devereux's curiosity was too much piqued to let the subject drop, and he teased Annie so much about it, that at last she was obliged to go on—

“ Well, Devereux,” said Annie, smiling and looking up towards him with her clear innocent eyes, free from every shadow of concealment or guile, “ it is your fault entirely, if I say what I ought not, as I shall be sure to tell Madame de Beaurevoir when I repeat this conversation to her. It seems to me then, O most provoking and mysterious Devereux, that on the whole, you like me very much!”

Devereux started.

“ Yes, very much, indeed, I should say; but there is a something that keeps you back, and induces you to repress somewhat the friendship you are otherwise inclined to bestow upon me. Then again, it comes out when you are not thinking, and you make yourself more agreeable than you had intended,—suddenly you remember something, and draw back again. Thus your manner, taken as a whole, is very coquettish—that is—coquettish, according to the explanation Madame’s daughter, Adèle, used to give me. Now, Devereux, what

have you to say for yourself,—what defence can you make?"

Devereux was so completely taken at unawares by this extraordinary onslaught on his confidence, that it was some moments before he could reply, during which his countenance assumed more than one expression very tantalizing to Annie.

"Devereux," she said, at last, "I believe I have gone too far. This is the sort of thing against which Madame de Beaurevoir warned me. I know I am very indiscreet and giddy. I do not want your confidence."

"And I am quite determined to bestow my confidence upon you, my dear Miss Baron, if you will kindly listen to me," said Devereux. "It will do me a great deal of good to open my mind, and talk frankly for once, now that you have broken the ice, and rendered it easy for me to do so."

"Go on," said Annie, "I am all attention,—you will find me a very grave and sedate

counsellor, very well versed in the ways of the world, and qualified to give you advice."

"You must know, Miss Baron," commenced Devereux, "that it is now six years and a half since I fell in love. The girl of my choice was poor and dependent; indeed she came to my mother's house in a very humble capacity, such as would altogether have prevented my taking any notice of her, or thinking of her at all, had it not been that I observed there was something mysterious in my mother's manner towards her. This piqued my curiosity, and in the end I found out that she was my own cousin-german, the daughter of my father's brother, who having married imprudently, and alienated his friends, left his family so poor, that his eldest daughter was obliged to do something to support herself. Of course this made me take a great interest in Kate; and this interest as I saw more of her, and thus learned her general excellence, soon ripened into affection."

“ Well, Devereux,” interrupted Annie, “ it is very kind of you to tell me all this. I do hope that Kate returned your affection. I like the name Kate too, for I have a dear sister called Kate.”

“ I did believe that Kate returned my affection,” continued Devereux bitterly ; “ but I probably deceived myself.”

“ Did she say she did ?” asked Annie.

“ She said so at last,” he replied ; “ but she was a long time in confessing it. The truth was, my mother would not hear of our marriage. I took Kate in at first, without intending it ; for I really believed that I had got my mother’s consent, and I made my cousin believe so. Had it not been for that, she would not have listened to me,—for she had a proud spirit, and would never consent to enter any family against the will of its principal member.”

“ And very right she was !” exclaimed Annie ; “ just what I should have felt and done myself.”

“ When she discovered that my mother was averse to the match, and that there was no hope of her being reconciled to it, she directly broke off our engagement ; but we had for a long time occasional communication through an old lady with whom Kate lives, who has been kind enough to correspond with me, and sometimes invited me to visit her. Thus I flattered myself that I had managed, till lately, to keep up some little interest in Kate’s heart, and I know, too, that she repeatedly refused excellent offers.”

“ All this looks well, if I may judge,” said Annie thoughtfully.

“ But this is not all,” rejoined Devereux ; “ the worst is to come. I was mad enough, two years ago, in a moment of pique against my mother, on account of her continued opposition to my marriage, to set off on a prolonged tour. News passed between us less frequently than before, and I fear Kate forgot me ;—perhaps my letters did not reach their

destination,—perhaps she grew tired of waiting. Let the cause be what it may, the fact is still the same,—the first news that greeted me on arriving at their old country-house was,—she was about to be married to another.”

“Did you see her?” asked Annie.

“No, she was abroad with her friend when I returned to England. My informant said that she would probably be married before coming home.”

“Fickle, inconstant creature!” exclaimed Annie; “I hate her! She did not deserve your long-enduring affection, Devereux. And yet, excuse my saying, that you were very silly to try her so, by remaining absent from her so long. There is great excuse for her, when I come to think of it, particularly as you were not actually engaged.”

“I do not blame her in the least!” said Devereux; “I can only regret that so much goodness and excellence are lost to me.”

Annie had too much delicacy to press the

subject farther, so she put her horse to a canter, and rode briskly onwards for some minutes. When at last they came to a hill, she slackened her pace, and turning to Devereux said,—

“But you have not explained to me, what all this has to do with your strange manner lately towards myself! I must be very stupid, I suppose, but I do not in the least see the connection!”

“Do you remember when I first saw you, Annie?” asked Devereux, “it was on the esplanade, and I came up to you with all the *empressement* of an old acquaintance, anxious to renew our intimacy. ‘Kate!’ I exclaimed, as I held out my hand! Do you not recall the circumstance? You drew yourself up with a proud look, which further increased the resemblance, and saying, ‘You mistake me, sir,’ haughtily passed on!”

“I remember the whole scene most vividly,” replied Annie, “for I was struck by

the remarkable change on your countenance when you discovered your mistake. You had been looking so eager and so happy, when all at once you turned the image of despair ! And so I am like Kate ! Well, I am very much flattered ! Now I quite understand your peculiar manner towards me ! Does the resemblance continue, now that you see more of me ?”

“ The resemblance has a good deal worn off since I have become more accustomed to you,” said Devereux ; “ your complexions are altogether different. She has dark eyes and hair, and a clear, pale skin. You are a complete blonde, and flush at each passing emotion. Still there are moments when you continue to recal Kate forcibly to my recollection. Your features are something alike, the turn of your head is the same, and even your voice has a tone occasionally very similar to hers !”

“ It is singular that we should be like,”

said Annie. "I wonder if she at all resembles my sister Kate!"

"Where is this sister that you speak of?" asked Devereux.

"I do not know, indeed," said Annie; "but I am hoping that papa will take me to see her after a few months! Papa is not so fond of her as he ought to be, and does all in his power to separate us. So I beg you will ask no more questions about her or he will be displeased!"

"Certainly," replied Devereux, "I shall comply with your commands. And now to return to my Kate, there is another curious coincidence which I must tell you. In addition to her resemblance to you, she is actually going to be married now to a man of the name of Baron! So you put me in mind of her in many ways!"

"The coincidence is very singular," said Annie, looking grave; "and now, Devereux, since you have made me a confidant, it

follows naturally that I should promote myself into the post of adviser. Grieving about Kate can do you no good, since by this time she, perhaps, belongs to another, so do try to banish her altogether from your mind! You had better give up coming to see me, since I put you in mind of her."

"If you force me to obey you, Miss Baron, you will take away from me the only pleasure I have left!" said Devereux.

"It appears to me it is a very dangerous pleasure!" said Annie, with great simplicity.

"It is dangerous!" exclaimed he, looking hard at Annie; "And yet it may cure me, who knows! I am fascinated and bewitched by the resemblance to her!"

For the first time Annie blushed, when she discovered that her words had been misinterpreted, and just then the conversation was interrupted by Mr. Baron and Miss Mitten joining them.

"My dear Miss Baron," exclaimed the latter,

looking curiously at Annie's flushed face; "you must be sure to rub your face with Rowland's Kalydor, as soon as you get home; the sun has burned you quite red!"

"She never looked better in her life!" exclaimed the old gentleman, sharply; "A fine skin needs no cosmetic! Let me recommend a little lemon juice for your own, after this hot ride! Yellow to yellow, acid to acid!" And Hoozoor Sydajee rubbed his hands, as he always did after saying anything unpleasant.

"Mr. Charteris, you will dine with us to-day, I hope!" he continued.

Devereux at first refused, but afterwards said that he should be very happy, and at the conclusion of the ride, entered the house along with them.

That day, after dinner, the old man was unusually silent, and when the ladies withdrew, Devereux found it impossible to keep up the conversation. After sitting a quarter of an hour in silence, he was meditating making his

escape and joining the ladies, when Hoozoor Sydajee suddenly looked up, and fixing his cold, glittering, blue eyes firmly on Devereux, astounded him not a little by saying:—

“Devereux Charteris, you have surely made up your mind to marry my daughter, if she will have you, or you would never visit so much here! Am I right?”

“Good God!” exclaimed Devereux; “I know not what to say, you astonish me so much by this unexpected question.”

Hoozoor’s brow assumed a frown at this reply, by no means agreeable.

“I—I—I,” stammered Devereux, “never dared to be so presumptuous as to think of Miss Baron. I, a younger son, with comparatively small fortune, dared not address your heiress as a suitor; I should have been mad to think of it.”

“Is that your only reason, young man?” asked Mr. Baron; “common sense might have whispered to you that if I had had any

objection to you as a son-in-law, I should never have encouraged you to be so much here."

Devereux hesitated, the old man observed it.

"Now, my dear fellow," said he, "I know you are thinking me a very odd, plain-spoken sort of person,—but it is my way; Nature made me blunt, and I am none the worse for it, though sometimes very disagreeable. Now you need not contradict me: all I want with you now is, that you take me in my own style; be as frank and off-hand with me as I am with you, and tell me, without reservation, what your feelings are towards Annie."

"I loved another," said Devereux, "for years before I even saw your daughter. A few days before I made your acquaintance I was suddenly told that she was about to marry another. Since then I have been trying to forget her, but it is not an easy task to root out, altogether, the memory of a first and

deep attachment. Still I must confess that your daughter has fascinated, dazzled, blinded me,—transported me out of myself,—and often made me, for the moment, forget my cause of sorrow. It was only this very day that I was taking myself to task for my giddy infatuation,—I call it infatuation, because, although my heart is full of another, and the memory of my first attachment will remain engraved on my soul to my dying day, yet I have been taking such exquisite pleasure in the society of your daughter that I am an enigma to myself. It seems to me almost as though I were acting a double part. And now, sir, I have come to the resolution to leave this place as fast as possible, and quit this too dangerous, too fascinating society.”

Hoozoor Sydajee looked very comical when he heard this proposal; and after meditating a second or two, thus spoke,—

“ Since Annie’s society is so very dangerous, and so very fascinating, I see no reason why

you should fly its witching. Remain where you are, and let events take their course. I have made up my mind that you are to be my son-in-law: and I question much whether your lady-mother has the slightest objection."

Devereux started from his chair, and seizing the old man's hand, exclaimed,—

"I am deeply gratified by the preference you show me, but I am not worthy of your daughter. She deserves a true and undivided affection; a heart whose best affections have already been given away is no fit offering for her. Besides, she does not care for me--her thoughts are as free as air."

"I have been doing all in my power for some time past," exclaimed Mr. Baron, "to make you like her, and make her like you. And now I am ready to forfeit my head if I have not succeeded."

Devereux looked puzzled and perplexed—gratified and yet miserable—at last he said,—

"My heart, such as it is, with all its imper-

fections and unworthiness, I will offer to your daughter, if it be really true that she regards me with preference."

"You are a trump, Mr. Charteris," exclaimed Mr. Baron; "and in proof that I think you so, you shall have no cause to regret marrying the old nabob's heiress. Now let us join the ladies—what say you?"

"You must excuse me to-night, Mr. Baron; it is absolutely necessary for me to go home, and think over this calmly. The conversations that have taken place to-day seem to me like a dream. I must go home and test their reality."

Devereux departed accordingly, and Hoozoor went up stairs to join the ladies.

"What a shame in Devereux to go away without saying good night to us!" exclaimed Annie; "I wanted him to sing a duet with me, too."

"It is getting late," observed Hoozoor, with a grim smile; "and time for honest folks to

be thinking of bed. There is Miss Mitten, now, looks very tired. You ought to go to bed, Miss Mitten, after your long ride."

"Nonsense, sir!" replied the spinster; "it is only a quarter past ten. There is a fascination in this hour, when passed in company with congenial minds. I do not feel the slightest fatigue."

"You ought to feel fatigued when I say it," sternly enunciated Hoozoor. "There is a wondrous fascination in a soft bed to weary bones, as I am sure yours must be, for you are not accustomed to riding. Go to bed, I say, Miss Mitten; you positively can scarcely sit up."

There was a look in Hoozoor's eye, saying plainly he was not to be trifled with. He lighted the spinster's candle, handed it to her with a deferential air of gallantry, and slowly and reluctantly she departed.

Annie could not help laughing heartily, as

soon as Miss Mitten was out of hearing, at her disconsolate exit, and then said,—

“I suppose I had better go, too, since you have sent my *chaperone* away.”

“No, you little goose, don’t you see that I sent her away on purpose to speak with you alone?”

“Well, uncle,” said Annie, archly;—“Papa, I mean—I trust you are going to say something very pleasant to console me for the loss of my duet.”

“I should hope you will take what I am going to say very pleasantly; most young ladies would,” replied he.

“But I am very unlike most young ladies,” said Annie; “so you must not reckon too much on my docility.”

“That I am fully aware of,” said her uncle, laughing; “considering you have been brought up in a convent, where I had hoped you would have been taught gentleness and submission,

you are the most unmanageable and skittish little creature I ever saw."

"Now, pray don't abuse me, uncle," said Annie, laughing, and giving him a kiss ; "you know very well you like me much better for being fearless and independent with you. You would have got tired of me by this time, had I been timid and frightened for you, as most people are. You are such a grim-looking man, and you have such an odious way of sneering at people, that you generally inspire terror wherever you appear; so it must be both a relief and a pleasure to you, to have me near you; because I treat you exactly as I would any other tender-hearted christian."

"Annie, you are too bad," said her uncle ; "you will provoke me some day ! Your tongue gets sharper and sharper the longer I know you."

"Now don't be ridiculous, dear uncle," replied his dutiful niece ; "you know very well that you like me to be as I am ; I found

out your character the first day I saw you, and I have acted upon it since. You ought to be very much obliged to me!"

"You are incorrigible," he replied; "I shall send you back to the convent some of these days."

"I shall, perhaps, ask you sooner than you think to let me go back; but it is time now for you to tell me what you have to say to me; if I do not hear it soon I shall go to bed."

"You are not to go to bed," said her uncle, "for it is something of consequence. Can you guess at all what it is about?"

"Perhaps," said Annie, casting down her eyes, with an air of mock gravity, "perhaps you are now bringing me the announcement of your approaching marriage with Miss Mitten."

"You are the most provoking, saucy little creature!" said her uncle, half annoyed and half amused; "And now I beg you will give

up jesting, and listen seriously to me. I am going to speak to you about the most important event in your life—your own marriage."

"My marriage!" exclaimed Annie; "it will be a very long time before that take place."

"I don't intend it shall be long!" said her uncle.

"But I do," said Annie. "However, as I cannot be married by myself, I should like to know who is the proposed bridegroom."

"Your heart tells you his name already, you tiresome little thing," said Hoozoor. "It is all affectation on your part feigning ignorance."

"I must say," replied Annie, while the colour mounted to her temples, "that I do not know a single individual whom I consider at all suitable."

"What!" exclaimed her uncle, "not Devereux Charteris?"

"Most assuredly not!" replied Annie, drawing herself up proudly. "I am not going to take another person's cast-off lover! No! I have too much spirit for that!"

"Then you don't like Devereux?" said old Baron, sarcastically; "and even though he were to tell me that your attractions had quite effaced the memory of his fickle first love from his heart, I am by your desire to give him his cool dismissal!"

Annie made no reply, but looked very strange.

"They say," continued Hoozoor, with a half comic expression on his naturally grim countenance, "that a man is prepared by his first love to worship the object of his second attachment. Take for example Romeo, whom Shakspeare, the great painter of the human heart, describes as loving another when he first saw Juliet."

"Very true!" said Annie, looking grave, and resting her forehead on her hand, as if she was meditating deeply.

Her uncle gave the faintest possible chuckle and rubbed his hands, but the sound was sufficient to rouse Annie.

“It will do no good,” said she, “for me to think over the question about the value of second love as compared to the first. It is not a thing I have anything to do with, for I am determined to be a nun.”

“In that case I had better forbid Devereux the house, at once,” said Hoozoor; “for he gave me to understand this evening that he meant to make you an offer.”

Annie blushed and turned away her face. as she replied—“Then he is very inconstant and absurd—I shall tell him so if he speak to me on the subject.”

“Say rather,” said Hoozoor, “that his feelings are like Romeo’s, and that he is madly in love with you—his Juliet.”

“Good night, uncle,” said Annie abruptly, her countenance deeply reddening; “I am

going to bed, for I do not like this conversation at all."

"She will do!—she will do! They will both do!" said the nabob to himself, as she left the room. "The train is fired! Nothing like good management!"

The next day, as early as etiquette would permit, Mr. Baron, impatient to see his plans put in execution, called upon Mrs. Charteris. She was not up, but he went into the drawing-room and amused himself with a book till she was ready. When she entered, he tried to keep up an indifferent conversation, but it was no use, she could not help observing from his nervous and excited manner that something had happened. At last he stopped short in the midst of a sentence, and abruptly exclaimed—

"I beg your pardon, madam, but really I must say what is uppermost in my thoughts. My daughter and your son appear to have

conceived a mutual attachment to each other,
— has their marriage your consent?"

Mrs. Charteris, whose nerves could ill stand any sudden excitement, nearly fainted at this announcement, and Madame de Beaurevoir had to be hastily summoned. Mr. Baron had to make his exit, looking rather crest-fallen at the effect of his indiscretion. In the evening he received a note from the old lady, which ran as follows :—

"DEAR SIR,

"It would give me great pleasure could I be convinced that there really existed an attachment between my son and your daughter, both on account of the great esteem and affection which I entertain for Miss Baron, and because it would also be a proof to me that my son was cured of an attachment he formed, when young, to a person whom I consider unworthy of him. You see I am frank with you, and I mention this to

put you on your guard. I much fear that my son is not cured of his first attachment,—it is a matter into which you should inquire, before permitting him to be so much with your beautiful daughter. I am very sorry to feel myself bound in honour to give you this warning, as nothing would have given me more happiness than the prospect of a match between Miss Baron and my son.

“ Believe me, sir,

“ Your’s very sincerely,

“ MAUDE CHARTERIS.”

“ All stuff and nonsense !” exclaimed the Nabob, as he read this epistle ; he immediately sat down and indited the following reply :—

“ DEAR MADAM,

“ Since your wishes coincide with mine on the subject of my communication to you this morning, I think it will be best, if I have your sanction, to allow the young people

the same unrestrained intimacy as formerly. No doubt the love affair will progress favourably, to the satisfaction of all parties.

“I remain, madam,

“With deep respect,

“Very truly your's,

J. BARON.”

The night after the old gentleman's conversation with Annie, she slept very little, being quite occupied with revolving in her own mind, the information she had received, which she could not altogether reconcile with the tenor of Devereux' confession in the morning. At last she came to the conclusion that he must have a peculiar organization, capable of loving two women at the same time, therefore it would be better for her to have nothing to do with him. Then a little, busy imp would whisper in her ear, that after all, the remembrance of his first love must naturally fade very rapidly, after her rejection

of his suit and marriage with another ; the field would then be clear for a new attachment, which would, probably, as her uncle had suggested, be stronger than the first ; because formed when the character was matured. At last, Annie started up in bed, and exclaimed,—

“ It is no use pleading in his favour !—I mean to be a nun ! And, besides, I am not going to take another person’s rejected lover ! I shall tell him so when he asks me ! I wonder if the offer will be made to-morrow ! ”

To-morrow came, and the offer was not made ;—the day after arrived, and still it was unheard ! Annie could not make it out, and when some days passed by, without anything unusual happening, Devereux making his appearance regularly as usual, she was very much disappointed, and half inclined to be angry with her uncle, for having made a fool of her ! Devereux’ manner remained nearly the same as before ; if there was any difference,

it was more respectful and less playful! Annie's manner, on the contrary, was by no means so easy and frank as formerly, sometimes she avoided him altogether, sometimes there was the slightest possible tinge of melancholy irritation, as if she were piqued with him for something which she did not choose to explain.

CHAPTER VI.

“When we have done our ancestors no shame,
But served our friends, and well served our fame,
Then should we wish our happy life to close,
And leave no more for fortune to dispose.”

Palamon and Arcite.

MRS. CASTLEMAINE and her suite were, by this time, established in large and fashionably furnished lodgings, a little distance from B——. The people of the house were evidently old acquaintances of Mrs. Dees and Salomé, which gave Kate some uneasiness when she

discovered it. Mrs. Dees, as was naturally to be expected, took the entire management of Mrs. Marjory's wardrobe ; but in some respects she exceeded her proper functions, for Kate more than once came suddenly upon her as she was examining old letters.

“ Does Mrs. Marjory know that you are arranging her papers ? ” asked Kate, in accents of surprise.

“ Mrs. Castlemaine is always perfectly satisfied with what I do, miss,” was the reply.

Kate at first determined to let the old lady know what was going on, but afterwards she changed her mind, for she was afraid that an interested motive might be imputed to her ; besides, the extraordinary influence acquired by the accomplices over Mrs. Castlemaine rendered any attempt to shake it almost hopeless. During the greater part of every day the trio were shut up together, while poor Kate wandered from room to

room, and cried. She would have given worlds for some kind and sympathising friend, to whom she could open her heart, but she knew not where to find one. At first she kept up her courage by expecting a letter from the Abbé. She forgot that she had not left him her address, and blamed him very much, when day after day passed, and none came. At last, hope deferred made her heart sick, and she fell into a state of listless despair. One evening, Mrs. Marjory called her to her bed-side, and said to her—

“ You are doubtless aware, my dear Kate, or at least you must have guessed, that, in addition to the course of medicine which I have been taking from Dr. Salomé, he has been magnetizing me.”

“ I thought so, mamma,” replied Kate ; “ but I could not be sure of it, as no one informed me. Do not you think that it is a great pity there should be so much

mystery attending the operations of these two persons ? It would surely be much more satisfactory, both to yourself and your friends, if they performed their actions more openly."

" There is something in what you say, Kate, my love, and I do not see why they should not ! Indeed, it was partly because I had been thinking so myself, that I called you to speak to me just now. Besides, I do not like to know that you are so much alone ; it cannot be good for you, and must affect your spirits ; so after this, I shall tell the doctor that I wish you to be present at the magnetic sittings."

Kate had the greatest unwillingness to witness them, and would gladly have refused, but she refrained ; because she thought she might be of use to her old friend. When Mrs. Dees came into the room, a few minutes afterwards, she was informed of the new

arrangement, and looked highly dissatisfied, saying—

“ It is impossible for Mrs. Marjory to guess the extent of the mischief she may do, by allowing a person to be present who feels inimical to some of the parties concerned ! ”

She darted a furious look at Kate, and then left the room.

“ You don’t dislike Mrs. Dees, or Dr. Salomé, do you, my love ? ” asked Mrs. Marjory ; “ are you not quite reconciled now, to their kind attentions towards me ? ”

“ No, mamma!—I dislike them from the very bottom of my heart, and I have the worst opinion of them ! ” exclaimed poor Kate, bursting into tears.

Mrs. Marjory looked very much shocked and surprised at this ebullition of feeling ; for she had been flattering herself lately, that Kate had quite got over the first very natural little jealousy of Mrs. Dees, and this impres-

sion had been strengthened by the abigail's extraordinary praise of her young mistress, whom she spoke of as a sort of angel upon earth. The old lady, however, said nothing, but waited silently till Kate became calm ; she then continued the conversation, as if nothing had happened.

“ You know my jewel-box, Kate—fetch it here. You see the diamonds—they are all yours, I shall never wear them again. This pearl necklace, which was my mother's, will look well on your white neck. The pearls are very valuable, from their size and purity. And this ring, much too large for your tiny finger, Kate, you will value when I am gone, for my sake as well as for another's. It contains my hair and *his*—it belonged once to your father, Kate! You know my secret, now.—Kiss the old woman, Kate, who has loved you so much, because you are *his* child ; and think fondly of her when she leaves you !”

“Oh, do not talk of leaving me, dearest mother!” gasped poor Kate, who was sobbing bitterly.

“I must talk of it, my own Kate, because I feel an interior conviction that the time is not very far distant.”

“Salomé does not think so? or has he said anything?” exclaimed Kate.

“No, he does not appear to think so,” Mrs. Marjory replied; “so you may comfort yourself with his opinion, if you like. He tells me that he has every hope of my ultimate recovery.”

“Then if you have confidence in him, why do you not believe him?” asked Kate.

Mrs. Marjory smiled, but did not answer; she only pressed Kate’s hand.

“Now, my love,” she continued, “we must go on with business. Put the jewel-box in the top drawer of that cabinet; you will know where to find it when I am gone. There are many more valuables in it which I have not

shown you, for I am getting faint and wish to finish what I have to say. My will is lying in a casket in the same drawer; in it I leave everything that is in my power to you; but the greater part of my landed property, being entailed, goes to Mr. Castlemaine, of Maine Castle. Now, my love, lock the drawer, put the key in your pocket and keep it; then come and kiss me, and send Salomé and Dees to me."

Mrs. Marjory was so fatigued with the excitement she had been undergoing, that her latter words were scarcely audible. Kate obeyed in silence, the tears in her eyes. She was surprised when she got to the door, to find it closed but not fastened, so that a person behind, by pushing it open a quarter of an inch, might easily hear all that passed. Her suspicions were awakened by seeing the slender figure of Mrs. Dees disappear at the end of the passage. She called after her, but the

wily abigail pretended not to hear, so that Kate was obliged, after all, to go to her room to find her. Mrs. Dees was busily engaged sewing when she entered, and had all the appearance of having been doing so for some time. Kate gave Mrs. Marjory's message to her, so she and the doctor immediately hastened to the old lady. Poor Kate then retired to the sanctuary of her own chamber, where she gave way unrestrainedly to her grief.

“ What would I not give,” she exclaimed, “ for one person, however humble, to write to, or speak to! I shall not write to the Abbé, though, alas! he is the only person I can think of, for he has not behaved generously towards me. After leading me on, and encouraging me to show him implicit confidence, he now neglects me. No, I will never write to him, nor call on him again, unless he take some notice of me first.—Shall I try John Baron?—Surely he is a firm friend.”

But her conscience whispered to her, “Hold no communication with him, unless you mean to encourage him as a lover.”

“Have I then no one?—Am I utterly friendless?—Can I not write to Mrs. Burnet?—Yes, Burnet is better than no one. But I dare not ask her to come here against Mrs. Marjory’s desire, who will not let her leave Bird’s-nest. At any rate, I can tell her the exact state of the case, and she can let all Mrs. Marjory’s neighbours and acquaintances know it, that at least will be sharing my responsibility with others, and I shall feel a great relief.”

So Kate sat down at once and wrote to Burnet, telling her everything that had passed since Mrs. Dees had joined them, but carefully abstaining from making note or comment of her own. She stated Dr. Salomé’s favourable opinion of his patient, as well as Mrs. Marjory’s apprehensions about herself. She begged Burnet to send a copy of her letter to Mr.

Castlemaine, the heir-at-law, and to show it also to every friend and acquaintance of Mrs. Marjory, who might inquire for her.

When Kate had done this, and put the letter in the post-office, she felt very much relieved; her spirits rose, and she got so cheerful, that she actually went and sat in the drawing-room and looked out of the window, which she had not done before, since Mrs. Marjory had been confined to her bedroom. She had scarcely been there a few minutes when Salomé joined her, a thing she would have resented at any other time; but she was too glad now to have an opportunity of speaking to him, and asking his candid opinion of Mrs. Marjory, to take any notice of his forwardness.

“There appears to be every reason to hope for a favourable recovery from the disease, or rather combination of diseases, for which we are now treating her,” said the doctor, in reply to Kate’s anxious queries; “unless—” and

here he paused—"unless a heart complaint, which I half suspect may have already proceeded too far."

"But is there no way of finding out the actual state of the heart?" asked Kate. "Is your medical science at fault?"

"I fear it is," replied Salomé; "unless we succeed in finding it out by means of clairvoyance. Could we once succeed in throwing the patient into a highly magnetic state, she might enlighten us herself, with regard to her own condition, and the remedies fit to be applied."

"It appears to me," said Kate, "that you are wasting precious time, and that while you are day after day, and week after week, vainly trying to throw her into this clairvoyante state, the heart disease, if it really exist, may be making progress. How much better would it be, and how much more satisfactory to Mrs. Marjory's friends, if you would propose to her to call in the advice of some enlightened prac-

titioner, who would either approve of what you have been doing, or suggest something better."

For a moment, Salomé curled his lip at this proposal,—it was only for a moment, however, and then his whole expression changed, and he cast such a melancholy, appealing glance upon Kate from his lustrous dark eyes, that had she not had a very hard heart, indeed, it would have melted.

"You misjudge me, Miss Devereux!" he said. "You painfully misjudge me! The time will yet come when you will acknowledge my skill, and confess that Mrs. Castlemaine has been treated in the best possible manner."

"I should think," said Kate, "that for your own satisfaction, and because you acknowledge yourself to be at fault, you would like to call in more advice."

"Acknowledge myself at fault!" exclaimed Salomé. "Alas, alas! How I am misinter-

preted! However, let it pass. I shall not presume to contradict your fair lips. With regard to your proposal, I regret that it is impossible for me to act in conjunction with any physician whatsoever in this country. I have the lowest opinion of their schools of medicine,—the most profound contempt for their bigotry and illiberality,—and the most thorough and well-grounded conviction of my own ineffable superiority.”

“God pity poor Mrs. Marjory!” exclaimed Kate, as she turned away.

“Rather say, Miss Devereux, God pity those under the care of physicians of the old school, who are as yet unenlightened by the progress of the new ideas. But why should I thus wrangle with you, when in reality every throb of my heart beats in unison with yours, did you but know it. Miss Devereux, we have a great field before us,—join with me,—co-operate with me, and great results will be

attained. I shall even sacrifice my pride—sacrifice what is due to me as a man of science and genius, if by doing so, I can gain your good opinion. I shall call in another physician to see Mrs. Castlemaine to-morrow, if you will give me reason to hope that I am not disagreeable to you."

"I shall repeat this conversation, word for word, to Mrs. Marjory, who I have no doubt will see the necessity herself of calling in another physician to-morrow," said Kate, in the coldest of cold and measured accents while she rose from her seat haughtily, and left the room.

The next morning Kate entered Mrs. Marjory's room, with the full intention of performing her threat; but she was so very sleepy and stupid, she seemed scarcely to understand what was said to her at first; and when Kate mentioned that Dr. Salomé had himself talked of allowing another physician to be called in, she

suddenly roused herself, got quite into a passion, so that it appeared useless to say any more.

The Marchioness meanwhile had called on Kate at the hotel in London, where she had first resided, and was much disappointed to find her gone. She learned her address however from the people of the house, but the Abbé being suddenly summoned to Paris, she had no opportunity of communicating it to him for several weeks. It was therefore some time after Kate's arrival at B—— before Madame de Beaurevoir received the letter of introduction. We shall leave Kate for the present, and return to Annie's affairs.

“Everything goes on as I could wish, Madame,” said Mrs. Charteris, to her friend. “Of course, Devereux has made up his mind to propose, or he would not visit Annie every day! Indeed, Mr. Baron has told me himself, that he had a conversation with him on the subject, and though he seemed to feel a

delicacy with regard to his former attachment, and his not having an individual heart to offer poor Annie, yet the old gentleman got over his scruples more easily than we could have expected!"

"I hope all will go well, for poor Annie's sake," said Madame, "for it seems to me that she is losing her heart as fast as possible! I think Mr. Baron has been rather imprudent in throwing her so much in Devereux' way; it is not as if he were a young man who had his first affections to offer."

"I entirely disagree with you, Madame!" said Mrs. Charteris, looking annoyed; "I have no doubt that this is the most fortunate thing that could have happened for Annie. She is so very inexperienced and thoughtless, and her uncle is so singular and eccentric, that there is no saying what scrape she might not have got into, had she not met with Devereux! Ten to one she would have been the prey of some fortune-hunter!"

“The question is,” said Madame, “has Devereux decided on asking her to be his wife. If he has, why does he not come forward at once? I am sure the suspense is affecting her health. She is at times very pale, at others, has a bright hectic flush, particularly when he is beside her—then she has become so nervous and exciteable—I never saw a girl so changed.”

Mrs. Charteris looked concerned, while she replied, “Mr. Baron told me that Devereux promised to ask Annie to be his wife as soon as he should be really convinced that she cared for him, and would not refuse him.”

“Then it is all right,” said Madame, “but he must be blind indeed not to see the real state of the case. Perhaps he is now waiting to hear of Kate’s marriage; or do you think it has already taken place?”

“If it had,” said Mrs. Charteris, “I should think Mrs. Marjory would have written to me. However I suppose she is still abroad, and she

takes for granted that I am absent from the Hall; so these two circumstances may account for her silence."

The evening of the same day on which this conversation took place, the post brought a letter for Madame, from the Abbé de Dillon. It was a very long one, so she retired to her own room to read it, and fortunate for her was it that she did so, as she was much shocked and pained by its contents. In it she learned that Kate, so far from being prosperously married, or about to be so, was living in the neighbourhood of B——, with Mrs. Marjory, who was then in declining health, and that the poor girl was in a most painful and isolated position. The Abbé described the personages into whose hands the old lady had fallen, and conjured Madame de Beaurevoir, for the love of Christ, to hasten to poor Kate, and be to her a friend and sister. He also begged she would state the circumstances to some gentleman of

honour and integrity among her friends, one who might be likely to interest himself in the matter—if possible, get him to call with her upon Kate. There was no saying to what length the accomplices might go, and the presence of a man might in certain emergencies be useful.

“Of course I shall tell Devereux, and get him to go with me to-morrow morning,” exclaimed Madame as she finished the letter. “But then poor Annie! It will be her death. She has no chance, if his first love come into competition with her! What in this world can I do?” And then poor Madame wrung her hands and began to cry.

“O cruel, cruel Abbé! What could have induced you to write to me! Why have you told me anything about it? It is not my business. Why should I be forced to make some one or other unhappy! I shall not go to Kate—I shall burn this letter. Burn it!” she exclaimed again,

"burn it, and refuse to go to Kate ! Am I mad ? He adjures me for the love of Christ to perform an act of charity. I cannot be so cold blooded as to refuse—I must go. But what can I say ? Shall I tell her that he is going to be married to Annie, and break the news to her as gently as I can ? or shall I let Devereux know the truth at once, and let him decide ? I believe the last is the best way ; but what will Mrs. Charteris say if I do so ! God help me ! how am I to act ?" And poor Madame de Beaurevoir cried as if her heart would break. Just then the lady's maid knocked at the door of her room and told her that Miss Baron and Miss Mitten had come to tea, and Mrs. Charteris wished her to come down stairs ; so Madame was obliged to stifle her grief, as best she could, and obey. The gentlemen being both engaged this evening, the ladies were quite alone. Miss Mitten devoted herself, as usual to Mrs. Charteris, so Annie had an excellent

opportunity for a *tête-à-tête* with Madame; which, indeed, was what she had principally come for.

“I have got such interesting information from Miss Mitten this morning, Madame,” said she in a low voice, as soon as she could draw the Frenchwoman to the piano, where she pretended to be looking over music.

“She told me,” she continued, “and without my asking her at all—so you must not blame me for curiosity—the whole story of Devereux’ love affair. You know, Madame, I have always taken an interest in Devereux, he is such a nice creature—so I was glad to hear all about it.”

Madame felt so pained and grieved that she could not utter a word; so she turned away her face, while Annie rattled on—

“She must have been very forward and very sly, by Miss Mitten’s account, to think of inveigling him! However, Miss Mitten did not tell me what I chanced to know before—

that she was his cousin, and that they both knew it. Of course that alters the matter very much—do *you* not think so?"

At this moment Madame stooped to pick up some music, so Annie continued—

"Miss Mitten gives such a disagreeable account of her, that I don't like her one bit! She would have made a bad wife for Devereux! What a pity he was so fond of her! I suppose he has quite got over his attachment now, since she is married! What do you think, Madame?"

"My dear girl, what are you talking of?", exclaimed Madame, suddenly turning round, and looking Annie full in the face, with such a pained and grieved expression, that the poor girl first of all coloured deeply, and then sank on a chair, quite frightened.

"What have I said, what have I done, Madame, that you look so awful?" she cried, as soon as she could speak; for the first moment of terror had taken away her breath;

"It is too bad of you to look so displeased, because I tell you everything, and treat you quite as a mother! You know that I mean no harm, and that I have got no real mother to direct me!"

And poor Annie burst into tears.

"My poor child!" exclaimed Madame, taking her in her arms; "God knows I did not mean to frighten you, or to look displeased! I never loved you better, or more dearly than at this moment—but I have received very painful news this evening, Annie! I am sadly puzzled—and I know not how to act—God alone can guide me!"

At this moment Miss Mitten glided rapidly across the room, and touching Madame, who was standing with her back towards her, whispered,—

"Observe Mrs. Charteris—how odd she is looking! I have spoken to her twice, and she has made no answer!"

A look of terror passed over the French-

woman's countenance, but she did not reply. Hastily disengaging herself from Annie, she darted to the side of Mrs. Charteris, and took her hand.

"You seem fatigued, madam," she said, "may I get you a glass of wine?"

But Mrs. Charteris did not reply—her head drooped more and more, till at last she almost fell off her chair. It was evidently a fit, or seizure of some sort! With difficulty she was carried to bed; physicians were sent for—Devereux summoned home. Mr. Baron arrived at the same time, and took Annie and Miss Mitten away. After seeing the patient, and consulting together, the physicians pronounced the old lady to be in a most dangerous state; so expresses were immediately sent off for Lionel and Alicia. She remained some days in a state of stupor, but towards the end of the week revived, and was able to recognise her much-loved son and his wife when they arrived. She

expressed a wish, also, to see her grandchildren ; and Eva and Evan were summoned, the one from Sandhurst, the other from a boarding-school, to receive their grandmother's blessing before she died. Such, indeed, was the expression used in the letters which they received ; for even before she recovered consciousness the doctors had pronounced that there was no hope. During the last few days of her illness, Lionel's grief was awful ;—it seemed as if the memory of all he had suffered, when he thought, years ago, that he had caused her death, returned upon him now with redoubled violence, and almost upset his reason. The blow was softened to Alicia, by her anxiety for him—she could not think of her mother-in-law, while alarmed so much on account of her beloved husband. He refused to go to bed, and when not allowed to remain in the room, sat on a chair outside the door, literally continuing without sleep, till all was over. The day she died, all her

children were collected round her bed, and she spoke a few words to each—

“God bless and reward you, Lionel,” she said, “for having more than made up to me in my old age, for the sorrow I experienced when younger! A mother’s best and fondest blessing be upon your head, and on Alicia’s! Forgive me, my son, for all the errors in my conduct towards you—I always loved you!”

The dying woman stopped, and leaned back on her pillow exhausted. Lionel, whose chest had been heaving convulsively, and who only by a tremendous effort succeeded in repressing all outward sound of agitation, staggered out of the room, followed by Alicia, and fell down as he passed the door. He was unable to come in again till all was over. Mrs. Charteris remained some minutes without speaking, at last she whispered—

“I wish Annie Baron to be sent for?”

A messenger was instantly dispatched for

her ; but it was more than half an hour before she arrived. During the interval Mrs. Charteris said a few words to her grandchildren, and also to Madame, thanking the latter in particular for her kindness and attention to her.

“ I have left you in my will, dear friend,” she whispered, “ what will enable you to return to France, and live with your daughters. God bless and reward you !”

Madame could not speak, she could only weep. At last Annie arrived, and, with tearful eyes, entered the sick chamber. Some one mentioned to the dying woman that she was come.

“ Let Devereux take her hand, and bring her near me,” said she.

He rose from his knees, for he had been kneeling by her bed-side, and obeyed. She made a sign to them to kneel down, and taking their hands in hers, she said,—

“ A mother’s blessing be on you, my chil-

dren ; may God Almighty sanctify your union, and may you long be a source of comfort and happiness to each other!"

Annie coloured like a rose ; but it was remarked by all who were present, that Devereux got as pale as ashes, and looked more like a corpse than a living being. After that, the senses of Mrs. Charteris began to wander, and she talked of many things.

" You had better all leave the room," whispered the doctor ; " I shall call you at the last."

All obeyed, except Devereux and Madame ; the former would not leave his dying mother to follow his young betrothed. The others had scarcely left the room when Mrs. Charteris said something which made her son start, and turning even paler than before, if possible, he looked at Madame. The words were,—

" Take my blessing to Kate Devereux ; she has always been a good and virtuous girl. Ask her to forgive any injury I may have done her!"

After that Mrs. Charteris sank into a stupor ; once only, for an instant, she revived a little, and whispered in scarcely audible accents,—

“ I know that my Redeemer liveth ! ” She then expired.

CHAPTER VII.

“When coldness wraps this suffering clay,
Ah ! whither strays the immortal mind ?
It cannot die, it cannot stay,
But leaves its darken’d dust behind.”

Hebrew Melodies.

IT was two or three days after the occurrences in the last chapter,—the clock had struck the hour of midnight,—Mrs. Marjory was asleep,—Kate was in bed,—the servants had retired to rest,—while Mrs. Dees and Dr. Salomé sat in the drawing-room together, at

the window, gazing on the moon-lit sea, and consulting together over their plans.

“I wish the old hag would die quickly!” exclaimed Mrs. Dees. “For my part I am tired waiting.”

“Don’t be too sure, mother, of what is to happen,” said the doctor; “perhaps she may recover yet, and laugh at us all.”

“Not if there be a grain of spirit left in you!” exclaimed Mrs. Dees, her eyes flashing sparks of anger; “not unless you are a recreant to your gipsy blood.”

The doctor lighted a cigar, which he coolly puffed out of the window, appearing quite unmoved by his mother’s excitement, while she continued,—

“You need not try to provoke me nor frighten me, by talking of her recovery,—even though you prove a coward, that can never take place.”

“Indeed!” said Dr. Salomé, taking his

cigar out of his mouth, and blowing away the ashes; "how do you make that out?"

"Her horoscope was drawn long ago!" said Mrs. Dees, in a rapid and distinct voice, with her gleaming eyes no longer looking at her son, but fixed on some vacant point, at an imaginary object, which he could not see; "she is to die in this place, and I am to be near; but I shall not reveal myself till the very last. Revenge is sweet,—how sweet, none but a gipsy knows. Well can I embitter her dying hour, by telling her of hopes blighted,—useless days,—weary nights, without friends, without relatives,—an isolated, good-for-nothing being, with not even a single disinterested attendant to close her eyes. Alone she entered the world, and in loneliness of soul she leaves it, with the gipsy's curse ringing in her ears, and ushering her into eternity."

"Mother, you are a fiend!" exclaimed the

doctor, once more taking his cigar from his mouth, and gazing on her with mingled admiration and aversion. "What becomes of Miss Devereux all this time? Do you think she will stand tamely by?"

"I think that I shall have got her out of the way very cleverly by that time," replied Mrs. Dees, dropping her tragic attitude and expression, and assuming a more scoffing, worldly, every-day sort of tone. "I owe her something, too, on my own account, as well as Trevor's."

"Trevor's!" exclaimed Dr. Salomé; "you do not mean to say that you are going to mix yourself up in that affair? What business have you with it? He was only your half-brother. The poor girl could not help herself; she must have acted as she did, or run the risk of having her throat cut. Besides, consider the tremendous risk you run if you harm her. With the old lady, on the contrary, everything goes on smoothly, and we need not put our

necks in jeopardy. No, no ; I say let Miss Devereux alone,—touch a hair of her head, and I act no farther."

" So you presume to dictate to me," cried Mrs. Dees ; " to say, 'Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther.' You forget yourself strangely."

" No matter," replied the doctor, coolly ; " I do not forget myself. I have only changed my mind, and formed other plans."

" What !" exclaimed Mrs. Dees, " have you formed other plans, too, about the old lady ? Have you forgotten the diamonds ? Do you mean to take no steps about getting the other will drawn up ?"

" These will all come in course. I was alluding to Miss Devereux," said Salomé.

" I wish that girl was at the very bottom of the Red Sea, with all its waves piled on the top of her !" exclaimed Mrs. Dees ; " however, let her pass. Tell me, now, what you mean to do with regard to the old woman ? When do you

propose beginning to use the hashish ? It is high time to bewilder her, if you mean to make use of her at all. And have you found the lawyer to draw up the will ? Better employ some London man ; you can't trust the people down here. Try one of the Old Bailey attorneys."

" Aye, aye, mother, I've seen to that. You do not suppose I have been sleeping all this time, do you ? The will is ready, and only waits to be signed."

" That is capital, my son !" exclaimed Mrs. Dees ; " then, by all means, use the hashish ; to-morrow."

The conversation of the worthy pair was here suddenly interrupted by the violent ringing of Mrs. Marjory's bell. Mrs. Dees flew to her ; but Kate was there before her, and when she entered, was supporting the old lady in bed, who evidently was in great agitation.

" What is the matter, my beloved mistress ?"

exclaimed Mrs. Dees, tossing her arms wildly, in a tragic fashion.

“Go away! go away!” exclaimed Mrs. Marjory, in accents of terror; and she began to sob hysterically.

“You had better go,” said Kate, “and ask Dr. Salomé for some restorative. She has had a frightful dream.”

Mrs. Dees looked surprised, but she obeyed with alacrity.

“Salomé,” she whispered to the doctor, whom she met in the passage, “the old fool has had a frightful dream; her nerves seem quite shaken. Now is the time to give the hashish—she wants some restorative.”

“I am not going to give it to-night,” replied Salomé; “it is not prepared, and I do not mean to administer it incautiously, and perhaps put my neck in jeopardy.”

Mrs. Dees’ expostulations were unavailing; the doctor was obstinate, and she was obliged

at last to return with a little sal-volatile, as she could get nothing more noxious.

“Keep her out of my sight, Kate! Put her out of my room!” shrieked Mrs. Marjory, as she entered.

“Do go, and leave the medicine, Mrs. Dees!” exclaimed Kate; “Mrs. Marjory cannot bear any one to come near her, she is so nervous!”

The abigail cast a look of defiance at Kate, and stood her ground; but Dr. Salomé, who had entered behind her, after regarding Mrs. Marjory for an instant with great curiosity, pulled her away, and led her out of the room.

“Something has happened,” he whispered; “you had better leave her alone till morning, when the impression may have worn off.”

The old lady made Kate come into bed beside her, and she soon sobbed herself to sleep in her arms; so it was quite evident that there could not be much the matter with her. She was very drowsy next day, and seemed

rather to avoid the subject of her midnight alarm, receiving the services of Mrs. Dees exactly the same as usual, seeming altogether to have forgotten her momentary repugnance towards her. Kate could not make it out at all; but she had no opportunity of questioning Mrs. Marjory on the subject, till late in the evening.

“My dear mother,” said she, “do tell me what frightened you so much last night? And what made you take such a sudden aversion to Mrs. Dees? You got over it very quickly in the morning.”

“An aversion to Mrs. Dees, child!” exclaimed Mrs. Marjory; “You are surely dreaming, quite as much as I was last night. I never saw *her*, but I saw the gipsy! Yes, Kate! I saw gipsy Jess as plainly as I now see you! I dreamt first of all, that I heard a confused murmur of voices talking; they spoke very indistinctly, but still I could gather that they were plotting together to compass my death,

and some grievous wrong against you, was connected with it. I started up in great alarm and rung the bell violently, to know if robbers had got into the house. You came to me almost immediately, and soothed me. *That* I know was reality, for I felt your arms round me, and heard your voice. But I am quite as certain of another occurrence, which I dare say you will deny. Gipsy Jess entered the room tossing her arms wildly, just as she did when she hurled imprecations on my poor head, that dreadful day! Her look—her attitude were exactly the same—only this time she mocked me—I heard her call me ‘Beloved mistress!’ And then, Kate, I turned to you, and you drove the fiend away! A second time she appeared, and I thought Dr. Salomé led her off!”

“My dear mother!” exclaimed Kate, “for heaven’s sake get this nonsense out of your head! There was no one in the room last

night but myself, the doctor, and Mrs. Dees. You must have taken the latter for the gipsy, as she ran into the room without her cap, and all her hair down about her ears! Her appearance was so much changed, that I do not wonder at your not recognizing her, when you must have been half asleep."

"I know what I saw, Kate; and nothing you can say will ever shake my belief," was the reply.

The old lady paused; and Kate, taking her work, sat in silence beside her. After a few minutes had elapsed, Mrs. Marjory again resumed the conversation—

"I saw in the newspaper to-day, the death of a very old friend of mine, one whom you, too, knew well, Mrs. Charteris!"

"Indeed!" cried Kate, turning pale; "is it possible! And Devereux?"

"Yes, you may well say, 'And Devereux?'" replied Mrs. Marjory. "Devereux' position must be altogether changed. There can be no

obstacle now to your marriage, if he has remained constant."

"If he has!" replied Kate in a low voice.

"I am very sorry now that I did not write to him at the time I spoke of it," continued the old lady; "but really Dr. Salomé and his magnetism put every thing else out of my head, and you know, Kate, that there have been very few days in which I should have been able. I shall write to-morrow a letter of condolence, that is, if I can; and I shall at the same time inform Devereux of a good deal, with which he appears to be unacquainted."

Kate did not reply but continued to ply her needle with rapidity, though she could scarcely see what she was about, her eyes were so filled with tears.

"No one can tell the anxiety I feel for you, my own child," Mrs. Marjory went on to say; "you have been indeed a daughter to me—a Ruth to poor old Naomi—and if I could but see

you settled before I die, how happy it would make me."

"Ah! mother dearest, do not speak of death, for heaven's sake! You will live many years yet, I trust, and I shall be a comfort to you. And oh! if you love me, put all thoughts of my marriage out of your head. I feel convinced in my own mind that he has forgotten me; he has probably seen by this time some younger person with a fairer face than I have, and thus poor Kate has passed out of his remembrance."

"Nay, nay Kate, you do him injustice. We shall put him to the test, however, for he shall hear from me in a day or two. I should like too," continued the old lady, after a pause, "to learn some particulars with regard to the last illness of Mrs. Charteris. I wonder if it was sudden, or if she had much time for preparation. Oh! Kate, sudden death must be an awful thing! Called in an instant to meet your God, and be judged! It has often struck

me that I shall be summoned away suddenly, for I have long suspected that I have a heart complaint. Salomé does not seem to understand altogether the action of my heart."

"My dear mother," exclaimed Kate, trying to put on a look of unconcern, which her anxious brow and quivering lip belied, "you must not take such fancies into your head, you will get so nervous that these absurd ideas may bring their own accomplishment, whereas at present you only want a little strength of mind to drive them away."

"No, Kate," replied her friend, "strength of mind will be of no avail in this case. I must try now to be prepared for whatever may happen—prepared to meet my God! Oh! may He show himself a father, and a kind father towards me, for I trust in Him! Kate, my dream last night has been a warning to me; for it was foretold me by the gipsy herself, that I should see her before I died, and I must confess I think, to say the least of it,

that my seeing her last night was a very singular coincidence."

Kate looked very much shocked and pained, but she felt it useless to reply, as her former attempt at explanation of the circumstances had not been well received, so the old lady continued—

"Then, when I read in the newspaper this morning of the death of my old friend, who had been at school with me, with whom I had afterwards passed during my youth many, many happy days, who was the same age as myself, but who always looked more strong and vigorous—I frankly confess to you, Kate, that the intelligence gave me a shock which I have hardly yet recovered. It seemed to me to say 'Prepare to follow'!"

Kate tried in vain to change the subject. Mrs. Marjory would talk of nothing but death and warnings till she fell asleep, which she did while Kate was still in the room, who could not understand how she could possibly

slumber so composedly, after the painful conversation which had completely upset herself, and shaken her nerves. She now went to call Mrs. Dees, and tell her not to disturb her mistress, as she had fallen asleep; she found her sitting at the drawing-room window with Dr. Salomé, and they both started as she entered.

“Mrs. Castlemaine is asleep,” she said, “so you had better not go to her any more to-night, Mrs. Dees, it would only disturb her.”

“Very well, Miss,” replied Mrs. Dees, sitting down again rudely, and turning her back.

“Mrs. Castlemaine seems much better to-day, Miss Devereux,” said the doctor, in his blandest voice, advancing towards her, “but you yourself, my dear young lady, look very much fatigued,—you ought to take care of your precious health. You ought to remember how valuable your acquaintance, nay, I may say your *friendship*, is to others, and on that

account, if for no other, leave the fagging occupation of attending the sick to Mrs. Dees, who is well accustomed to it, and bestow a little of your charming society, from time to time, upon one who can well appreciate it."

Kate stared at the coxcomb, and when he had finished his oration, instead of replying, simply said good night, and left the room. Mrs. Dees laughed heartily, but the doctor had far too high an opinion of his handsome self to feel mortified.

"Now mother," said the doctor, "it seems high time for me to be explicit with regard to the change in my plans, of which I gave you a hint some days ago. I mean to get hold of the diamonds, and I mean that the old lady shall make a will in our favour, just as we at first proposed, but I do not intend to bewilder her with the hashish. She has some very singular ailments, and I do not know what the consequence might be, of using hashish on her peculiar constitution. If anything happened,

you know I might swing for it, mother, which would be particularly disagreeable."

"Nothing venture nothing win," replied his mother; "if you do not use the hashish, how are you going to attain your ends?"

"I shall attain them very easily, and in a most simple manner!" replied the doctor, looking down on his own handsome person, and surveying it with great satisfaction; "I mean to marry Kate Devereux."

"The devil!" exclaimed Mrs. Dees, her face getting black with passion; "And what becomes of my revenge and of my wrongs? Do you think I have waited patiently for this moment during so many years.—Do you think I have worked, and toiled, and allied myself with miscreants, only to attain the position in which I now am, and that I will forego my end?—Are you mad?—Do you imagine I can blot out the past,—that I can forget Reginald Devereux, and the woman that supplanted me?—I came here to compass her death, and

I *will* see her die.—If exhausted nature do not sink ere long, I mean to hasten the operation."

" You ought to think of your son, mother!" said the doctor, who did not appear at all shocked at his mother's diabolical intentions; " let me marry Miss Devereux quietly, and get out of the way first."

" You, marry Miss Devereux !—You, take to wife the woman that caused your uncle's death! —Have you a spark of gipsy blood in you? —I don't believe it.—You are a recreant!"

" I hate the gipsies and all connected with them, except yourself," replied the doctor.— " I am sick of this wicked life,—I want to become honest, and go with Kate Devereux to another country. You had better follow my example, mother,—give up your evil ways and repent."

Mrs. Dees laughed long and hearty. " To hear you preach reminds me of the devil, when he a monk would be," at last she said;

“And so you really mean to commence your reformation by committing incest? A very bright thought, upon my word!”

“How, mother?” exclaimed Dr. Salomé, looking aghast; “what do you mean?”

“I mean,” she replied, “that I cannot help being highly amused at your project of commencing a career of virtue by marrying your own sister.”

“Good God!” exclaimed the unfortunate Salomé, quite overcome by the shock,—“is there indeed no hope for me?—Can I never escape from the meshes of this villainy?—Are you sure of what you say, woman?” he exclaimed, grasping his mother’s arm, and staring wildly in her face, while he shook her as though he would annihilate her;—“You tell me a lie,—an abominable lie,—and you know it!”

“Unhand me, my son,—calm yourself,—I am sorry for it,—I pity you, I do indeed, from the bottom of my heart!” said his

mother, who, seeing him so painfully excited, thought it the best plan to adopt mild measures. "As I hope for mercy at my dying hour,—and, bad as I am, I mean to repent some day,—I swear to you that Kate Devereux is your sister! Her father and your's was the same Reginald Devereux! No wonder I hate the woman that supplanted me,—no wonder I hate the fruit of his iniquitous marriage!"

Dr. Salomé turned away his face and groaned; Mrs. Dees remained silent to let him come to himself a little. She waited about half an hour, and then she said,—

"Now, my son, there is no use playing the fool any longer,—we are poor, and we must live! What we do, had better be done quickly. I am in daily apprehension lest the convicts come down upon us, and if they find out that anything is going on, of course they will insist on a share in the booty! Now do make up your mind to give the

hashish to-morrow and get the will signed leaving everything to us!"

"I suppose I must," said the doctor, sighing deeply. "The fates are against me! One thing, however, I must and will bargain for, before I stir a step, you shall swear to me that there is no foul play beyond what I know, no harm done to the old lady, or Kate Devereux."

"Oh, yes!" exclaimed Mrs. Dees, curling her lip, "I am ready to swear anything you like, if you will only be a man, and act quickly!"

"Then we are agreed!" said the doctor, scanning his mother narrowly.

"Yes, agreed by all that is sacred!" she replied.

"Then go into her room softly," said the doctor, "and bring out her phial of medicine, I shall change its contents now, at once. Bring me word how she is looking, and if she is sleeping sweetly."

Mrs. Dees obeyed, but she remained a long time absent ; when, at last, she returned, it was without the phial, and her face expressing great alarm.

“ Hush !” she said, “ be silent, and have your wits about you ! Come with me and tell me the meaning of this.”

She took him by the arm, and led him to the sick-room ; what they saw we shall not now explain, suffice it to say, that Dr. Salomé’s opinion confirmed Mrs. Dees’ previous conjecture. After a good deal of consultation and whispering, they looked for the old lady’s keys, and unlocked her drawers ; then taking out the jewel box, the casket containing the will, and some ready money which was lying about, they secured them about their own persons.

“ Hark,—the bell is ringing !” exclaimed the doctor ; “ she will sail in a quarter of an hour without fail ! There is no time to lose. Let us be off !”

Mrs. Dees darted to her own room, and hastily stuffing into a carpet bag a few of her most valuable effects, was ready in three minutes to join the doctor, who was fuming with impatience at the foot of the staircase. They ran rather than walked, to the pier, and were just in time to get on board the steamer for Boulogne, ere she sailed!

“Good-by to England! Good-by to my virtuous resolves!” bitterly exclaimed Dr. Salomé, as he paced up and down the deck with his mother.

She laughed in her sneering way, and then said, “A pretty kettle of fish you have made of it! Could you not have foreseen this, and warned me! I should have watched her night and day, rather than that she should slip through my fingers this way! But I don’t trust you, you are either a dolt and no son of mine, or you were in league with her! I curse her! I curse the girl! I curse you all!”

"Be silent, mother!" said Dr. Salomé, in a tone that made her start, "a truce with your upbraidings, or we part company for ever!"

The woman was sobered at once. "What do you mean to do? Where do you mean to go?" he continued. "There will be a hue and cry after us!"

Mrs. Dees thought for a moment and then replied. "It is easy to disguise ourselves,—trust a gipsy for that! Let us try to get a private cabin at once before daylight dawns, and commence operations!"

"And then, mother?" said the doctor.

"And then for Paris," replied Mrs. Dees, "as a new Madame Normand and a modern Cagliostro, we shall reap a pretty harvest, and do quite as well, perhaps better, than if we had choused the old lady out of her money!"

We shall now leave these wretches and return to Kate. The next morning, as she was dressing, the house appeared to her unusually still, she did not hear Mrs. Dees

bustling about, getting Mrs. Marjory's breakfast, nor was the doctor pacing up and down his room as usual. She noticed the change, and that was all ; it scarcely cost her a thought. Before going down stairs to her own breakfast, she went to Mrs. Marjory's room, as usual, to inquire for her health, but, though she knocked twice, nobody answered. She thought the old lady must be asleep, so she entered softly to see. Her old friend had her eyes closed, she looked different from usual, perhaps, better. Her face was very pale, but it was so perfectly calm and placid, and there was such a bright, happy smile playing round the lips, that Kate paused an instant to admire her. But stop ! What is it she sees ? Or, rather, what is it that she does not see ? She starts,—approaches nearer,—listens,—puts her lips to *her* lips,—takes her hand and tries to feel the pulse. It is in vain ! She shrieks and rushes to the

bell, which she pulls so violently that it breaks !

“ Dees ! Dees ! Salomé ! Doctor ! Doctor Salomé !” she cries, wildly, as she rushes like a mad thing through every room, in her vain search. No one replies,—no one answers to her call,—till Thomas, the servant they had engaged in London, appears.

“ Where are they ? Call the doctor ! Call Dees ! Get the people of the lodging-house up ! She is dead ! She is dead ! and they are gone !” was all she could say.

The people of the house at last made their appearance, but it was some time before they could be made to comprehend the state of the case. Kate soon became calmer, and got them to assist her in doing everything that could tend to revive the unfortunate lady, in the faint hope that life might not yet be extinct. Thomas, meanwhile, was despatched for a doctor. A most miserable half-hour

passed, during which the suspense was agony. At last the physician arrived ; but when he saw the inanimate body, he shook his head, and said,—

“ Alas ! my dear young lady, it is beyond our skill to restore life to the dead.”

On further examination, he pronounced that life must have been extinct some hours. The coroner was instantly sent for, and with Kate’s concurrence the body was opened, as there was some suspicion, from the extraordinary absence of Mrs. Dees and Dr. Salomé, that foul play must have gone on. It was an indescribable relief to her feelings when she was informed that the immediate cause of death was disease of the heart, and that there was no trace in the stomach of anything improper having been administered.

The coroner was still in the house, when the door bell rang violently, and a person inquired if Mrs. Castlemaine was at home.

“ She died this morning, sir,” was the

chilling reply. "They found her dead in bed; it was disease of the heart, sir."

"Is the young person that lived with her here still? A girl called Miss Devereux," was the next, not very polite, inquiry.

"She is keeping her room, sir; but she is half distracted,—like one out of her mind, sir. You could not see her, I am sure," was the answer.

"Tell her I must see her," said the gentleman. "It was a fortunate thing that I came here, though, of course, in perfect ignorance of the circumstances; for I am the heir-at-law. Here, take my card—Mr. Castlemaine, of Maine Castle."

The woman did as she was desired, and poor Kate was compelled to come down stairs, and face the stranger. He was a good-looking, elderly man, with a cold, hard expression, which sent a chill through Kate's heart. He seemed surprised as she entered; it was evident he had not expected to see

such a nice-looking person. He bowed as she approached, and said,—

“On reading your letter, Miss Devereux, which Mrs. Burnet sent me,—and a very proper and judicious sort of epistle it was,—it occurred to me that the best thing I could do, in the circumstances, would be to start immediately for the south, and try to get my old relative out of the hands of these sharpers. By the way, you described them in amazingly lenient terms! They are no friends of yours, I hope! What is the meaning of their running away? A bad business! A bad business, Miss Devereux! Very shocking affair!”

Poor Kate was not in a state to answer many questions, and Mr. Castlemaine did not show much delicacy in those he asked. After putting her to the torture for nearly half an hour, he at last released her, as he felt it incumbent on him to despatch a missive to his lawyer in London, whose presence he immediately requested. Kate retired to her

own room, and throwing herself on the floor in an agony of grief and loneliness, wept bitterly,—she wept almost as one that has no hope, for she knew not whither to turn, or where to go; her best, and most valued friend was gone,—gone for ever,—and without even a last adieu! How bitterly then did she recall the complaints she had made against her in her heart, and the dissatisfaction she had felt in secret on account of her poor friend's infatuation.

“Perhaps, if I had acted differently, perhaps if I had not so frequently lost my temper, I might have had more influence, and I might have rescued her from their hands. And yet who knows! The doctor seems to think that she would have died whatever medical treatment she received. Ah! let me try to say, ‘God’s will be done!’ and believe that all has been arranged for the best. But oh! it is hard, hard to realize it!”

When the lawyer arrived, Kate was again

summoned down stairs, and was asked if she knew whether the deceased had left a will, and in whose hands it had been placed.

“ I know the drawer where it was laid, beside Mrs. Marjory’s jewels ! ” was her reply.

Mr. Castlemaine looked as black as thunder, and suggested, in a sneering tone,—

“ Perhaps, Miss Devereux is aware of the contents of her friend’s will ! ”

Kate blushed, and did not answer, which confirmed the suspicions of the heir-at-law, that she had used some underhand influence with the old lady. She unlocked the drawer in the presence of the two gentlemen ; but turned pale and sank on the floor when she found it was empty.

“ Good God ! what is to become of me ? ” she exclaimed.

“ Piece of abominable acting ! ” said Mr. Castlemaine to the lawyer, in an audible whisper.

“ Well, where is the jewel-box, miss ? That

• at least ought to be forthcoming," he continued, turning to Kate.

"I know not!" she replied, in faint accents; "but, at any rate, it is my loss, and not yours; for Mrs. Marjory gave them to me a few days before she died, when she told me the contents of her will."

"In which she left you the sole heiress of all she could will away from me, doubtless! A very pretty story, upon my word!" said the heir-at-law.

"She did, Mr. Castlemaine! You have said the truth!" replied Kate, rising from the ground, and trying to stand and confront his gaze, though so weak, she was obliged to catch hold of a chair for support.

"You may retire to your own room, young lady!" said Mr. Castlemaine; "this is a bad business, and must be looked into narrowly."

Kate left the room, more dead than alive, and inexpressibly tortured by the turn, which her affairs seemed to be taking. Her misery

was so excessive, that she felt nearly out of her mind ; her brain was in a whirl, she had a racking head-ache, and her thoughts were so confused and bewildered, that she felt it altogether impossible to sit down calmly, and consider what ought to be done. She could only throw herself on her bed, and try to weep, but even that consolation was denied her ; in her deepest distress, tears would not flow.

“ You are very hard, Mr. Castlemaine, on that poor girl ! ” said the lawyer, as soon as she left the room ; “ you will, I trust, excuse me speaking so freely, but we lawyers have great experience in detecting the worse side of human nature ; and it is my candid opinion that she is as innocent, as the babe unborn, of any evil actions, or even evil intention, in this case. Why should she have told you that the jewel-box and the will were there, if she had any hand in their abstraction ? — the idea is monstrous ! Take my advice, and get a war-

rant made out directly, to apprehend the doctor and the nurse—they are the real culprits!"

"The latter part of your advice I think very sound," said Mr. Castlemaine; "but I entirely differ from you in your opinion of Miss Devereux. I shall certainly keep an eye upon her, until all this mystery is cleared up."

Meanwhile, Kate's head throbbed fearfully—she felt like the man in the iron shroud, where the walls hemmed him in closer and closer each day, till they buried him alive; so adverse circumstances occurring one after another, gradually extinguished all hope. Every outlet of escape seemed barred against her—hemmed in by overwhelming misery—without money—without friends—it seemed to her as though there was nothing to be done, but to lie down and die.

"If I could only weep," she said to herself, "or if even I had half an hour's sleep; anything to relieve this throbbing head—this

tortured brain—then, perhaps, I could sit down calmly and reflect; perhaps I might then contrive some plan—perhaps I might see clearly what is best to be done! But I am helpless now—I want some one to think for me, since I cannot think for myself! Oh! for one kind friend to whom I might speak!"

At this very moment, a kind friend was much nearer than she had any idea of, though unfortunately it was a person without one grain of common sense or prudence. A lady drove up to the door, in a hackney coach, and asked for Miss Devereux. She was shown into a parlour, while the servant went up stairs to announce her.

"A lady, who refuses to give her name, Miss," said the maid, as she knocked at Kate's bed-room door, "wishes to see you."

"I can see no one," replied Kate, in faint accents, "I am far too ill."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed the lady, on getting this message, "I am such an old friend, I must

see her, though she be at death's door. Take me to her bedroom."

The maid hesitated, but Miss Jones, for it was she, softened her obduracy by slipping half-a-crown into her hand, so in two minutes more she was up-stairs, and had found out Kate's room.

"Ah! Kate, Kate! My peerless Kate! My Kittenbottom!" she exclaimed as she entered; "What is the matter? Why grieving alone? Where is the old lady? How is Mrs. Marjory?"

"Do you not know," cried Kate, astonished, "that Mrs. Marjory died last night?"

But we shall pass over the painful explanation that ensued, and not attempt to describe Miss. Jones's grief, which was as violent as it was short-lived. In about a quarter of an hour she had nearly regained her cheerfulness, and was able to account to Kate for her unexpected appearance. It

seems that she had been staying with Mrs. Russell during the greater part of the present year, and one day passing near Bird's-nest, she stopped to have a chat with Mrs. Burnet, and inquire the news of the absent family. The housekeeper informed her that Mrs. Marjory was ill, and then let her read Kate's letter. She was beginning to tire of her sojourn with Mrs. Russel, and anxious for a change ; so as Mr. Russel had business, which called him to the south about this time, she determined to accompany him—afterwards proceed onwards alone—join Mrs. Marjory and Kate—and offer to assist the latter in taking care of the invalid.

“ So here I am, my love ! ” she thus concluded her narrative ; “ a bad penny always turns up again ! You did not expect to see me here, I am sure ; nevertheless, I am here bodily —a creature of flesh and blood—one that will be very useful to you, to matronize and

protect you, now that you have nobody better."

Kate thanked her for her kindness, but the unnatural calmness with which she spoke, the strange way in which she fixed her blood-shot eyes upon her, and the exceedingly haggard and miserable look of her countenance, pained the kind-hearted Miss Jones, who, with all her folly, had sense enough to see that there was something far wrong with her young friend. She would have said so, and inquired the cause, had she not been interrupted by the maid, coming to inform Kate, that Mr. Penman, Mr. Castlemaine's lawyer, desired to speak with her. Kate obeyed mechanically, followed the messenger, and found herself, though scarcely knowing what she was doing, in the presence of the man of law.

"I am very sorry for you, Miss Devereux!" he said, in a mild compassionate tone; "but my client appears determined to act in oppo-

sition to my advice with regard to you. He has actually obtained a search warrant, and your boxes and drawers are to be examined before you leave this house."

"Let it be so!" said Kate, calmly; "I am past feeling the degradation."

"If I could be of any use to you, Miss Devereux, in giving you advice, or in any other way, I should feel it an honour would you condescend to make use of me," said the lawyer, as she was rising to leave the room.

"I am much obliged to you," said Kate; but she answered as one in a dream, not knowing what she was about.

The search took place, and, as might have been anticipated, nothing was found. All the time it was going on, Kate lay on the sofa, with her face buried in the cushions, not appearing to heed Miss Jones's indignant exclamations and remarks. As soon as it was

finished, Kate started up, and taking hold of her friend's hand, exclaimed,—

“ We must go, Miss Jones.—After this insult, I cannot remain another hour under the same roof with that man.”

“ I am ready to follow you to the end of the world!” responded Miss Jones; “ suppose we take lodgings in some cottage,—love in a cottage, you know,—quite romantic.”

Kate sent for the woman of the house and stated her plan. The latter felt great pity and commiseration for the poor girl, and strong indignation against those, who had treated her so cruelly; so she exerted herself immediately to find the two ladies quiet and retired lodgings in the outskirts of the town. Here they removed in the course of the afternoon, without saying good bye to any one, except the kind-hearted landlady.

“ Well, this is charming!” exclaimed Betta, as soon as she found herself settled in her new

abode ;—“Love in a cottage at last!—the day-dream of my whole life!—The only thing wanting is for me to put on breeches!”

“What?” inquired Kate with a start, for she had been lost in a reverie.

“Oh, my love, I forgot!” replied Betta ;—“delicacy shocked,—refinement,—all that sort of thing.—I must get measured, as soon as we have had our tea, for a pair of unmentionables. But, dear me, how lachrymose you look, and yet you don’t cry. Let it out, my dear.—Uncork the water-spouts of your eyes ; it will do you good !

“I wish I could,” replied poor Kate ; “then my aching head would be relieved, which is throbbing as though it were going to split.”

“Poor dear!” exclaimed Betta ; “don’t you think you could cry if you saw anybody else do it? Example is better than precept all the world over. I mean to have a regular set-to in a few minutes, but let me go for my handkerchief first.”

Instead of crying, Kate began to laugh, which made Miss Jones very indignant.

“Upon my word, Kate Devereux, all pains are lost upon you. Just as I was going to talk of poor lamented Mrs. Charteris, dead and buried, you begin in the cachinnatory style.—Very heartless upon my word.”

Kate was sobered directly.

“And Devereux too!—Poor fellow!—Awful times!—Nothing but deaths and marriages!—However, don’t be frightened,—he is very well! By the way, Kate, what money have you got? for we must think of the one thing needful. I’ve only ten pounds in my purse, and that won’t last long, you know.”

“And I have only two!” replied Kate; “but then Mrs. Marjory owed me my half-year’s allowance, and I dare say that Mr. Penman, who did not look so brutal as his employer, will get it for me.”

“At any rate,” said Betta, “I have only to apply to the Charterises,—they always give

me what money I want; so we need never be in any difficulty."

"The Charterises!" exclaimed Kate, and darting from her chair, she seized Miss Jones by the arm, which she grasped so tightly that she made her scream; "Promise me! Promise me! Swear to me, by all you hold sacred," she cried, "that you will never, never apply to them for aid, as long as you are with me! If you are determined to have recourse to them, you shall leave me!"

"Hoity toity! My dear child, what is the good of all this fury? Of course I'll promise or swear anything you like, rather than leave you!"

"Then you swear solemnly to have no intercourse with the Charterises, without my permission, whilst we occupy the same roof!" exclaimed Kate, with the excitement of a mad creature.

"Yes," said Betta, "I swear it to please you! But, for any sake, Kate, let go my

arm—I am sure you have made it black and blue! I never saw you so excited before—it is quite refreshing to catch you for once in the wrong!"

"Do you think I could bear," exclaimed Kate, "that they should see me in this state of degradation? A suspected thief—without money—without friends—a beggar—a suppliant on their bounty!"

"So that is it!" cried Betta; "I must say I thought it was jealousy! However, considering the admirer you had abroad, that Mrs. Burnet told me of, I must say, I think you might let poor Devereux please himself quietly, without getting into a passion about it!"

"What about Devereux? What do you mean?" inquired poor Kate, her heart sinking within her.

"So you really do not know!" cried Betta, in accents of surprise. "However, as you are going to be married yourself to somebody—

else, I suppose I need not scruple to tell you. I had it all in a letter from Madame de Beaurevoir, before I left Mrs. Russel. It seems that a queer old nabob from India, a Mr. Baron, (precisely the same name as your admirer—a most singular coincidence!) came, with his beautiful daughter, Miss Annie Baron, to enjoy the sea-breezes here."

Kate gave a faint shriek when she heard the name of Annie, but she compressed her lips and said nothing. It appeared as if the cup of her misery had not yet been full.

"They brought letters of introduction to old Mrs. Charteris.—Devereux was thrown much in the young lady's way,—both the old people were bent on making a match of it, and the end was, that on the old lady's death-bed, (Madame says she cannot in the least understand how it came about, it took her so by surprise,) Devereux and the lovely Miss Baron knelt by her bedside;—she blessed

them, joined their hands, and they were betrothed."

"It is enough!" said Kate, in a low faint voice; "give me your arm, Miss Jones, and help me to my room."

With difficulty, notwithstanding Betta's assistance, was she undressed and placed in bed. Miss Jones heard her tossing about uneasily and moaning faintly all night; several times she asked for water, but that was all she said. In the morning she did not know her friend, for she was in a raging, delirious fever.

CHAPTER VIII.

“O thoughtless mortals ! ever blind to fate,
Too soon dejected, and too soon elate.”

Rape of the Lock.

ANNIE had written to the Abbé, giving him a thousand and one reasons, why she had acted most properly and judiciously, in forming an engagement with Devereux Charteris. Amongst other things, she mentioned that it was her uncle's wish,—she herself was too giddy and thoughtless for a nun,—and,

lastly, it would be a great blessing for her intended, because his attachment to her had cured him (so she had been informed), of a foolish fancy for a person in an inferior station, which had kept him entangled, and materially injured his prospects, for a number of years. Annie wrote in the innocence of her heart, little suspecting the real state of the case. The Abbé, on the other hand, did not at all like this slight hint, thus casually thrown out; it made a great impression on his mind, and he felt most anxious to get to the bottom of it. He was debating whether he should not give himself a holiday, and run down to B—— for a few days, as there were now two persons residing there, in whom he took a deep interest, when the door opened, and Madame di Valdigamas entered. Her object in coming was to inquire if the Abbé had received an answer from Madame de Beau-revoir, giving any intelligence whatsoever regarding Miss Devereux. She was quite shocked

when he replied in the negative, and immediately declared her intention of going down to B——. It seems that her physician having ordered her bathing, she was determined to make herself useful in the cause of charity at the same time. The Abbé asked her to let him accompany her, and the good little lady was quite delighted to do so.

“ I want to find out Kate Devereux, of course,” said the Abbé, “ but I have a second object in view. It seems that my giddy little favourite, whom you admired so much, Annie Baron, has engaged herself to a young man of fortune, in a very hurried sort of way. Now I want to learn all particulars regarding it, and give her a little good advice; for I consider her, as in an especial manner, my *protégée*. She tells me too, that old Mrs. Charteris, the person with whom Madame de Beau-revoir used to live, is dead, and that the latter is now residing with her; but why Madame does not write to me is yet a mystery.”

The Abbé and the Marchioness started for B——. directly, and reached it late in the afternoon; the former left his companion at the hotel, and went straight to call upon Miss Baron. He found her alone, for the Nabob and Devereux had gone to London the previous evening to arrange the marriage-settlements. Miss Mitten had left her as soon as the Frenchwoman came to reside with her, and the latter had been out all day.

“ I am so glad,—so very glad you are come, my dear Abbé ! ” exclaimed Annie; “ it was very, very kind of you to think of poor little me, when you have so many cares and perplexities, always occupying you in London.”

“ I came down partly on your account, my dear Annie, but not altogether ! ” said the Abbé; “ I suppose, you already guess what is my other object ! ”

“ No, indeed, I do not ! ” replied Annie; “ I don’t know any body of your acquaintance here, unless it is Madame de Beaurevoir ! ”

“ You are very stupid.” replied the Abbé, “ don’t you know that I take almost as much interest in your sister as in yourself ? ”

“ My sister ! ” exclaimed Annie, in an ecstacy of delight; “ is my sister,—my own dear sister Kate here ? Why did you not tell me before ? Where is she ? And how long has she been here ? ”

“ My dear girl ! ” exclaimed the Abbé; “ what can be the meaning of this ? Has not Madame de Beaurevoir told you all about it ? ”

“ No ! ” replied Annie, turning pale; “ and if Madame knows all about it, then I feel convinced that there is something wrong ; for she went on so strangely this morning ! She took up the B—— Gazette at breakfast, appeared dreadfully shocked at something she read,—thrust the paper into her pocket, without letting me look at it,—and ran out of the room ! ”

“Did she say nothing?” asked the Abbé.

“She mentioned you!” replied Annie, “when her eye first caught the paragraph, she exclaimed, ‘Good God! what will the Abbé say!’”

The Abbé, who looked considerably alarmed, rang the bell directly, and ordered a copy of the B—— Gazette to be sent for, he then asked if Madame had returned, but nothing had been heard of her since the morning. The paper, at last, arrived, and the Abbé read an exaggerated account of Mrs. Marjory’s death,—the flight of Mrs. Dees with Dr. Salomé,—and the painful suspicions that had at first been entertained with regard to the cause of the decease. All this time Annie was perusing the paper over the Abbé’s shoulder, and when she came to the end she exclaimed,—

“Thank God! Kate is not mentioned! Though I am sure, from what you said when

you found the paragraph, any one might have supposed she was ! What a fright you gave me !”

“ But it *has* to do with your sister, my dear girl !” exclaimed the Abbé. “ What can you be thinking of ! Don’t you know that she lived with this Mrs. Marjory Castle-maine, and must have been in the house when all this occurred ?”

At hearing this, Annie was very much shocked and alarmed ; and when the Abbé expressed his intention of going directly in quest of Kate, she insisted upon being allowed to accompany him.

“ I can do no harm,” she said, “ even though I may be able to do no good ! And I shall die with agitation if you leave me here alone ! To think that my own sister Kate, whom I loved next to my mother, should have been with such wretches !”

So the Abbé was constrained, at last, to take the spoiled little heiress with him.

They called on the way for Madame de Valdigamas, and after a hurried explanation of the circumstances, engaged her to accompany them. When they reached "The Grove," where Mrs. Castlemaine died, they found it surrounded by a crowd of people, all anxious to get a view of the premises, where the late transactions had occurred; so it was quite a relief when the woman of the house informed them, that Kate had removed yesterday, to quieter lodgings, and that a female friend had called and taken her away. The Abbé fancied this must have been Madame de Beaurevoir, but Annie said it was impossible. After a quarter of an hour's drive, they reached the cottage where Kate really was, and with a beating heart Annie, accompanied by her friends, descended from the carriage.

"Is Miss Devereux at home?" inquired the Abbé; "Do you mean the poor mad young lady, sir?" was the question asked in reply.

“There is a Miss Devereux here, sir, but she is very ill, in fact raving mad. The other lady, Miss Jones, is tending her, and she is in a sad way about her—frightened out of her wits—and no wonder, sir: perhaps you are a friend of the sick lady, may I make bold to inquire?”

Meanwhile Annie trembled in every limb, and would have sunk on the ground had not Madame di Valdigamas supported her, and led her into the house, where she had her placed on a sofa. The Abbé meanwhile sent the woman up stairs with the message, that a friend of Miss Devereux presented his compliments to Miss Jones, and begged she would honour him with an interview for a few minutes. Miss Jones did not keep them long waiting, but made her appearance almost immediately, in a very dishevelled and woe-begone state. Her usually gay attire did not show to advantage from the crushing it had received, while performing the charitable office

of nurse to poor Kate. Her eyes were swollen with weeping, and the wrinkles on her face, which had been in existence from the time we first met her, were now much deepened.

The Abbé apologized for his intrusion, and explained the object of his visit. He then introduced Madame di Valdigamas and Miss Baron ; but poor Betta was in such an excited and bewildered state, that she took no notice of their names. It seems Madame de Beau-revoir, who had been there for some hours, having made exactly the same round as the present party, was just gone. She had been with poor Kate when the physician arrived, and had seen her bled. After that operation was over, she told Miss Jones that it was her intention to watch Kate all night, but that she would go home first, and inform her friends what she was about, lest they should become uneasy on account of her absence. They had doubtless passed her on the road. Madame had other reasons besides for hastening home ;

she was anxious to write at once to the Abbé, and inform him of the melancholy circumstances, in which she found his *protégée*; and she was trembling too, lest some indiscreet person should tell Annie anything whatsoever with regard to Kate Devereux. She herself could not decide how much Annie ought to know, and what should be withheld from her, so she determined to keep everything a secret if possible, till she could ask counsel of the Abbé.

“What does the physician think of her?” asked Annie, the moment she could get in a word; for it took Miss Jones some time to tell the party what had been already done. “Does he say there is any hope?”

“Yes, he thinks there is hope,” said Miss Jones, “because she is young and strong, but he does not attempt to conceal the fact, that she is in great danger.

“Kate! Kate! am I to lose you, the

moment I find you!" exclaimed Annie bursting into tears and sobbing aloud.

Miss Jones stared at her visitor in surprise; the Abbé observed her perplexity, and said—

"She is her sister."

"My poor girl!" exclaimed the warm-hearted Johnny, throwing her arms round Annie's neck; "don't grieve! There is no fear of her! She is young and strong. Take my word for it, she will live. I'll make her live; for I'll go to that gay deceiver myself, and tell him the truth about her, which I am sure he does not know. Poor thing! She has been attached to Devereux Charteris for so many years, and now he is going to marry another; and all through some absurd mistake. But I'll put him right,—I'll make him see things as they really are, and bring him back to her. Don't be uneasy about your sister, my dear young lady! I promise you she will get well as soon as Devereux returns to her; but no

wonder she is out of her mind now, for her heart is breaking."

Miss Jones spoke in this way because, during her delirium, Kate had confessed her secret. The moment Annie's ear caught the name of Devereux Charteris she stopped crying, and listened attentively ; she got paler and paler, but did not seem at all to lose her presence of mind. The Abbé and Madame di Valdigamas were so dreadfully shocked that, though they would have given worlds to stop Miss Jones, they felt it was useless, for Annie had comprehended the thing almost before they did.

"I understand,—I understand—no one can deceive me now!" said poor Annie, in a calm, low voice ; "lead me to my sister ; I wish to see her."

Miss Jones remonstrated, but Annie rose, and motioned to her to go on. She led her to a small bed-chamber, and opening the door ushered her in. Here she beheld her sister,—

that beloved sister, so long separated from her,—who had been as a mother to her in her tender childhood; whom she had thought of, and dreamed of, and pined for, during her long absence from her native land; here she was, lying on a bed of pain,—tossing uneasily,—moaning piteously,—finding no rest for her weary limbs and aching head,—not even able to recognize and welcome her, for the light of reason had fled! And she, Annie Devereux, was the cause of this!

Annie looked at her sister with such a heart-broken and piteous look, that Madame di Valdigamas, who had followed her closely, and entered the room along with her, was constrained to turn away her face, to hide her tears. Annie gazed a few minutes, without weeping, without sobbing,—her beautiful countenance expressing all that woman could of love and anguish. Then kneeling down by the bed-side, she clasped her hands, looked up to heaven, and said,—

“Father, I trust in Thee! Help my weakness!”

She remained some minutes in prayer; they could not hear what she said, but they all remained silent. Then, rising from her knees, and kissing Kate’s pale forehead, while a tear, and only one, trickled down her cheek, she signed to her companions to follow, and left the room. When she returned to the parlour, where the Abbé was awaiting her, she was as white as ivory, but a placid and contented smile played round her lips.

“I am going home now,” she said to him, “but in the evening I mean to return to Kate.”

During their drive home the Abbé and Madame di Valdigamas conversed together in a low tone, for Annie evidently wished to be left quiet. On her return she found that her uncle and Devereux, having come back from London, were awaiting her. She immediately requested to speak with the latter alone, and in the most delicate terms in her power she told him everything she knew.

He was speechless—his tongue seemed paralyzed—he could not utter a word. She looked at him with curiosity, to see if the announcement brought him joy or sorrow—she listened eagerly to catch, if it were only one expression of grief, because his engagement with her was now about to be dissolved. She looked in vain—she listened in vain ; a flood of joy seemed to overpower him at the thought that Kate was still unmarried, still free, still attached to him. Exultation showed itself in every feature, till one look at Annie's expression of pain recalled him to himself ; he was ashamed, and he covered his face with his hands. When he looked up he was alone ; Annie had stolen out of the room—he never saw her again.

After a hurried interview with the uncle, which put him into a rage, Annie returned to her sister, and remained with her till her recovery.

Devereux had a long conversation with

Madame de Beaurevoir, whom he sent for as soon as Annie left him, and acted by her advice. He remained at B—— till Kate was pronounced out of danger, and then he started for the north to visit Lionel and Alicia. The Frenchwoman advised him to remain with them till she should write to summon him, which she promised to do as soon as Kate should be sufficiently prepared to receive him.

When Kate was able to be moved, Madame di Valdigamas had the whole party transferred to her hotel, where she lavished every attention upon them, that her kind heart could suggest. Old Mr. Baron's obduracy was at last softened ; he had at first refused to see Kate, or to have anything to do with Annie, while she remained under the same roof with her sister. Annie valued his threats very lightly, and even had the audacity to laugh one day, when she met him by accident. He passed her without speaking, but afterwards turned round to look after her ; she also was

turning to look at him—their eyes met—a glance of intelligence passed between them—he held out his arms—she rushed towards him,—and a kiss sealed the compact of reconciliation.

While Kate was getting better, the two sisters were inseparable; Annie nursed her with the fondest devotion, and Kate seemed deeply grateful; but there was evidently something on Kate's mind which depressed her spirits, and the silent tears would often run down her cheeks, when she thought that her sister did not observe her. By mutual consent, the name of Devereux Charteris was never mentioned. Kate still thought he was engaged to Annie, and Annie felt convinced, judging of her sister's generous heart by her own, that it would be useless to speak of him at present, because it would excite a contest between them, as to who should give him up, and perhaps have the effect of preventing him marrying either. She laid her plans, therefore,

and her uncle having consented to her arrangements, she acted accordingly.

One evening, after Kate had nearly recovered her strength, Annie was more affectionate than usual ; once or twice, Kate caught her eye fixed upon her with such an earnest and loving expression, that she was quite struck with it, but she did not like to ask the meaning, for her conscious heart whispered that perhaps Devereux had something to do with it. She was not surprised then, when Annie coming up to her, and putting her arm round her waist, whispered—

“ You will not be grieved, I trust, if uncle and I start for Paris to-morrow with Madame ! The Marchioness will take good care of you, for two or three weeks ! ”

“ I shall try not to grieve for your absence, dearest Annie,” replied Kate, struggling to look as firm and heroic as possible, though her lip trembled ; for she had not the least doubt that Annie was leaving her, and to be married,

that delicacy and kind feeling, alone, prevented her telling her so.

“It is better for me that you should go,” she continued, “if Madame di Valdigamas will kindly allow me to stay with her, till I get quite strong ; and you must not come back too soon.”

Annie’s heart was throbbing till it was an agony ; her sister fancied that she was making the sacrifice, while, in reality, it was all on the other side ! She told her not to come back too soon ! What a mockery ! Poor Annie felt that the separation was probably for life ! It was vain any longer to try to suppress her emotions ; bursting into tears, and sobbing with the grief of a breaking heart, more, perhaps, at leaving her sister, than at giving up her lover, she cast herself at Kate’s feet, and exclaimed,—

“Bless me, my sister ! Bless your child !” Kate put her hand on her head and tried to murmur something ; but the agitation was too

much for her in her weak state, and she fainted away. The next morning, Annie, Mr. Baron, and Madame de Beaurevoir started for Paris, and Kate was left with the Marchioness and Miss Jones. Devereux arrived that very day, as Annie had pre-arranged ; but Madame di Valdigamas did not judge it prudent to inform Kate of the real state of the case for some days ; far less, to run the risk of endangering her health, by the excitement, consequent upon seeing her lover. Devereux was therefore obliged to curb his impatience, until the Marchioness gradually prepared Kate's mind for the reception of the truth.

We shall leave the reader to imagine the happiness of the lovers when once more reunited. He must not take for granted that it was a very gay wedding, however ; as Kate made a point of its being solemnized in the most private manner possible ; she did not wish the report to reach

Annie, that it had been made an occasion of rejoicing.

Since her return from Paris, Annie had resided at Baronscliffe with her uncle ; nobody knows what she is going to be ; —some people think she will one day join her beloved nuns, who rendered her youth so happy in Paris ;—others say that she is so devoted to her uncle, and does so much good upon his estate, that she is evidently in her destined sphere of usefulness, and therefore not likely to change it. At any rate, she has plenty of time to make up her mind, for she is only three and twenty ! John Baron lives in their neighbourhood, having retired from business, and purchased a beautiful property, adjoining Baronscliffe. He suffered very much when he first heard of Kate's marriage ; but found much consolation in the charming society of Annie, whom he was so fortunate as to meet with in Paris. Since that time he has

regarded her as something between a daughter and a sister,—almost dearer than either. The good which the two cousins have done in that neighbourhood is quite wonderful ; they seem never weary of promoting plans of philanthropy, and the old man, with all his faults, is not behind them in liberality. Annie is now looking forward to her younger brother and sister joining her at Baronscliffe, and seems perfectly happy. There is some talk also of Kate and her husband paying them a visit soon. Annie and John Baron, who have been discussing the matter, have agreed that they can both receive them with the most perfect equanimity, their former feelings now appearing to them like a dream.

One thing more we must not forget to mention : since the last French Revolution, Kate received a packet from a man, high in authority, and one who has made himself a name during the popular excitement. It contained Mrs. Marjory's will, which Mrs. Dees had

abstracted; so Kate had the satisfaction of bringing her husband a handsome fortune, instead of being a penniless bride. The person who restored it, is supposed to be Dr. Salomé, but, if so, he has changed his name, and got on very well in the world,—his notoriety at least, if we cannot call it fame, having spread throughout Europe. If any of our young lady friends should now wish to have their fortunes told, through the medium of that highly gifted woman, Mrs. Dees, we can recommend them, when next they visit Paris, to inquire for the *sorcière*, who lives next door to the apartment, in which resided the late lamented Madame Normand.

THE END.

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